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ABSTRACT

Applicable to all levels of education, the eight digests and four FAST (Focused Access to Selected Topics) bibliographies included in this special collection focus on testing and assessment in the fields of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The material in this special collection is designed for use by teachers, students, administrators, researchers, policymakers, and parents. The digests are on the following topics: Testing Literature: The Current State of Affairs; Evaluating Student Writing: Methods and Measurement; The Issue: Adult Literacy Assessment; How Well Do Tests Measure Real Reading?; Note-Taking: What Do We Know about the Benefits?; Large Scale Writing Assessment; Dialogue Journals; and Assessing Listening and Speaking Skills. The bibliographies deal with the following subjects: strengthening test-taking and study strategies in reading; reading and writing assessment in middle and secondary schools; informal reading inventories; and reading assessment in elementary education. A profile of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills (ERIC/RCS), and information on requesting a computerized search service, searching ERIC in print, submitting material to ERIC/RCS, books available from ERIC/RCS, and an order form are attached. (RS)

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TESTING AND ASSESSMENT

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Testing and Assessment

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Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills

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ERIC (an acronym for Educational Resources Information Center) is a national network of 16 clearinghouses, each of which is responsible for building the ERIC database by identifying and abstracting various educational resources, including research reports, curriculum guides, conference papers, journal articles, and government reports. The Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills (ERIC/RCS) collects educational information specifically related to reading, English, journalism, speech, and theater at all levels. ERIC/RCS also covers interdisciplinary areas, such as media studies, reading and writing technology, mass communication, language arts, critical thinking, literature, and many aspects of literacy.

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ERIC/RCS Special Collection 1: Testing and Assessment

What Are ERIC/RCS Special Collections?

Each *ERIC/RCS Special Collection* contains ten or more Digests and FAST Bibs offering a variety of viewpoints on selected topics of interest and importance in contemporary education. ERIC Digests are brief syntheses of the research that has been done on a specific topic. FAST Bibs (Focused Access to Selected Topics) are annotated bibliographies with selected entries from the ERIC database. Both Digests and FAST Bibs provide up-to-date information in an accessible format.

TESTING AND ASSESSMENT

This material on assessment cuts across educational levels and can be applied to elementary, secondary, higher education, and special populations. Our *Special Collections* are intended as a resource that can be used quickly and effectively by teachers, students, administrators, researchers, policy makers, and parents. The Digests may be consulted for a summary of, or a particular viewpoint on, the research in an area, while the FAST Bibs may be used as the start of a more extensive look into what is available in the ERIC database on a subject of interest.

What are Some of the Important Issues in Testing and Assessment?

In this *Special Collection* we have gathered information on testing and assessment in the fields of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The field of assessment is changing rapidly. Many people are actively seeking new ways to assess learning by using instruments, other than—or in addition to—standardized tests. Critics of traditional assessment argue that standardized tests often serve political ends more than they do the student, and that they do not authentically reflect a student's achievement. Other people are working to improve currently available standardized tests, and to devise new ones, saying that large-scale assessment is essential to measure educational progress in a diverse population. They point out that, while traditional assessment is no more accurate than the familiar multiple-choice test, alternative assessments may be far less reliable. Those taking center positions in the debate affirm that each of the various different forms of testing has its proper place, and that all test results must be interpreted with caution. Both formal and informal means of assessment should be reliable, valid, and fair. The best means of accomplishing valid and reliable assessment is what the debate is all about.

How Well Do Tests Measure Real Reading?

Some critics of current reading tests claim that these tests measure mastery of reading subskills rather than "real" reading—i.e., the acquisition of meaning. Others assert that many reading tests are indirect; they cannot really measure the reading process, but instead they measure comprehension, on the assumption that the reading process and comprehension are directly related. In a Digest entitled *How Well Do Tests Measure Real Reading? Janet L. Powell reviews some of the research on the testing of reading comprehension. She describes* a study she carried out with sixth-grade readers, and she concludes that multiple-choice questions and written retellings both had construct validity.

How Well Is the Understanding of Literature Assessed?

Alan Purves, in a Digest entitled *Testing Literature: The Current State of Affairs*, says that "the nation's testing programs devote a great deal of energy to testing reading and writing, but they fail to treat literature and cultural literacy seriously....The tests focus on literal comprehension and on the reading of prose fiction. Poetry and drama are seldom included. If literature and its artistic aspects are not made important in those tests which affect students' lives and influence teaching, no wonder that students' knowledge and appreciation are as poor as critics of the schools...claim they are." In a sweeping indictment of most current U.S. tests that try to assess understanding of literature, Purves maintains that multiple-choice questions in these tests focus attention on text comprehension at a relatively low level of understanding, with a somewhat higher

level required to answer essay questions. "The power of literature to capture the imagination of the reader remains unexplored in most assessments, which treat the texts as if they were no different from articles in encyclopedias or research reports."

How Should Student Writing Be Evaluated?

In a Digest entitled *Evaluating Student Writing: Methods and Measurement*, Nancy Hyslop describes some of the ways in which students can be encouraged to read and evaluate their own writing through peer editing, writing groups, conferences, and other means, thereby becoming better readers and writers. She describes some of the informal observations and structured performance-sample assessments that some people feel are more appropriate than standardized tests to evaluate progress in writing.

Alternative Language-Arts Assessment

Portfolio assessment and a variety of other techniques constitute what may be collectively described as "alternative assessment." In August 1990, a national symposium on alternative assessment was held in Bloomington, Indiana, sponsored jointly by ERIC/RCS, the IU Center for Reading and Language Studies, and Phi Delta Kappa. People holding a wide variety of views regarding the best ways to assess learning in the language arts were present. Represented were the education profession, including school teachers, school administrators, and professors; political bodies at the local, state, and federal levels; formal testing agencies; and test instrument developers and publishers. The proceedings of that symposium are now available in book-form: *Alternative Assessment of Performance in the Language Arts*. To obtain this book, please see the order form at the end of this Special Collection.

These and other topics are addressed in this collection of ERIC materials. Our intention is to help you become more familiar with some of the issues and research behind the current controversy over testing and assessment in the United States. We hope you will find this ERIC/RCS Special Collection useful.

Further Information in the ERIC Database

In addition to the citations found in the annotated bibliographies included in this collection, others may be located by searching the ERIC database. A few of the terms that would be useful in undertaking a search are these:

Educational-Assessment, Evaluation-Methods, Testing-, Tests-, Evaluation-, and Informal-Assessment

ERIC Clearinghouse on Tests, Measurement, and Evaluation

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills is concerned with testing and assessment as it applies to reading, writing, speaking, and listening. However, the ERIC system has a clearinghouse that deals with tests, measurement, and evaluation in the entire field of education. Please contact it for further information:

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ERIC Digest

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Testing Literature: The Current State of Affairs

by Alan C. Purves

Many who have seen Robin Williams as Mr. Keating in *Dead Poet's Society* have said that things aren't that way now.The schools don't treat literature as a set of dead facts that can be weighed and measured. Mr. Keating was a voice in the wilderness of the 1950's but things have changed now. Or have they? If you look at the tests that face today's students, you would see that Mr. Keating has been thoroughly routed from the schools. Such are the findings of a new report of the Center for The Learning and Teaching of Literature at the University at Albany, which is sponsored by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the United States Department of Education and by the National Endowment for the Arts.

The nation's testing programs devote a great deal of energy to testing reading and writing, but they fail to treat literature and cultural literacy seriously. The artistic aspects of literature and the cultural heritage of our society are not reflected in the nation's tests and as a result lead to neglect by the schools. The tests focus on literal comprehension and on the reading of prose fiction. Poetry and drama are seldom included. If literature and its artistic aspects are not made important in those tests which affect students' lives and influence teaching, no wonder that students' knowledge and appreciation are as poor as critics of the schools like E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Diane Ravitch, and Allan Bloom claim they are.

State Policies

The study includes a census of the state assessment offices to find out the states' policy towards literature learning and its testing. (See Table.) Testing of learning in literature is not emphasized as a separate topic by most states, but is treated as an aspect of reading. What this means in practice is that reading assessments either include some passages from literary works in their mix of sources of texts or include a literature section as a sub-test within a reading assessment. Only two states have a humanities assessment and thus include literature as an aspect of general cultural and intellectual history. Fewer than a quarter of the states (mostly in the Northeast) measure student knowledge of specific authors and titles, literary terminology, or general cultural information, and only two of the states report that these particular measures are used to help determine promotion or graduation. Reading is important in state assessment or competence tests, but literature plays a minor role.

Content versus Knowledge

The second part of the study was an analysis of all of the published tests produced for secondary school students including those in anthology series and those used in the state assessments. The analysis covered the sorts of knowledge and skill that were measured. Most of the tests use multiple-choice questions. Almost universally, the focus of the questions is on the comprehension of content, particularly on the meaning of specific parts or of the main idea or theme of a passage which is given to the student to read. Only in college placement tests is there some emphasis on knowledge, primarily of authors and titles. As to aspects of the text other than content, there is relatively scant attention paid, and notably absent from the tests are any items dealing with such artistic characteristics of literature as language, structure, and point of view.

Typical Tests

When one turns to the critical skills demanded in these tests, a similar pattern emerges. The vast majority of the items in all tests focus on recognition and recall and on the application of knowledge to

Alan C. Purves is a Director of the Center for the Learning and Teaching of Literature, University at Albany.

the given text. There is relatively little attempt to deal with such complex mental operations as analysis, interpretation, and generalization.

A typical test will have a two-paragraph excerpt from a novel or story and follow it with three or four questions like these fictitious examples:

- In line 10, the word rogue means: a) stranger, b) out of control, c) colored with red, d) falling apart
- The two people are: a) father and son, b) brothers, c) husband and wife, d) strangers
- This section is about: a) the end of an adventure, b) the relationship between people and animals, c) the climax of a journey, d) the break-up of a family

Such questions hardly tap the imaginative power of fiction or drama; in fact they reduce them to the level of textbooks where the knowledge is factual. Some of the published texts go so far as to ask true or false questions like: *Huckleberry Finn is a good boy,* or *Hamlet is Mad.* As a result, students find that they do not have to read the selection; they can turn to plot summaries or simplified study guides.

Summary and Conclusions

In summary, multiple-choice questions focus their attention on text comprehension at a relatively low level of understanding. They do so without clear differentiation between reading a literary selection and reading a non-literary one; any text is viewed as having content that can be easily summarized into a single main idea, point, gist, or theme. When a test includes an essay question, the level is higher. Most of the essays call for some sort of summary or critical comment, usually addressed to the content of the selection and its interpretation. There is little emphasis on form or aesthetic judgment.

By and large the tests that now exist in the United States do not live up to the standards set by the examination systems of countries in which student achievement in literature is high. There is little focus on students' abilities to penetrate a text or to use the array of cultural and literary knowledge that should have been made available to them. The power of literature to capture the imagination of the reader remains unexplored in most assessments, which treat the texts as if they were no different from articles in encyclopedias or research reports. This state of affairs is contrary to the type of approach to literature that Mr. Keating espoused.

A copy of the complete report, P. Brody, C. DeMilo, and A. C. Purves, *The Current State of Assessment in Literature* Report Series 3.1 is available from the Center for the Learning and Teaching of Literature, University at Albany, State University of New York, 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222 ($7.00) and through the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Indiana University, Smith Research Center, Suite 150, Bloomington, IN 47408-2698. [ED 315 765]

Table: State Assessments of Literature Achievement 1987-1988 School Year

How Literature is Assessed (n=number of states)	Northeast (n=11)	Southeast (n=13)	Central (N=12)	West (n=15)	Total (n=51)
As a Separate Area					
Commercial Test	0	0	0	0	0
State Developed	3	0	1	1	5
Both	0	0	0	0	0
Through Reading					
Commercial Test	3	1	4	1	9
State Developed	5	1	1	3	10
Both	0	8	1	3	12
Through Writing					
Commercial Test	0	0	0	0	0
State Developed	1	0	1	1	3
Both	0	0	0	0	0
Through Humanities					
Commercial Test	0	0	0	0	0
State Developed	2	0	0	0	2
Both	0	0%	0	0	0
Total Assessing					
Literature in Any	8	10	6	7	31
Percent of States	73%	77%	50%	47%	61%

Sample was the 50 U.S. States and Washington, D.C.

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Evaluating Student Writing: Methods and Measurement

by Nancy B. Hyslop

Persons involved in the field of composition have sought continuously over the past two decades to shape and refine discourse theory and develop more effective classroom methods of evaluation. A careful look at these efforts suggests that the material dealing with evaluating writing is not unlike the body of a hydra: we have one theoretical body supporting two heads. Using one of the heads, we develop various methods to critique or respond to students' written products (even as these products represent a stage in the writing process); with the other head we devise ways to measure or assess the quality of the written product according to some value system. This digest will consider (1) the methods of response and (2) the measurement of quality as represented by effective classroom teaching methods.

Methods of Response

Responding to student writing is probably the most challenging part of teaching writing. It not only takes a tremendous amount of time and demands a great deal of intellectual activity, it also affects to a large extent how students feel about their ability to write. It becomes increasingly obvious that teachers may become less pressured and more effective in dealing with response only as they are able to redefine their role from that of an examiner who must spend enormous amounts of time grading every paper to that of a facilitator who helps students recognize and work on their own strengths and weaknesses (Grant-Davie, 1987).

Effective time-saving techniques which reflect this philosophy were gathered from research articles by Fuery and Standford and classified by Krest (1987). Peer revision, peer editing, peer grading, computer programs, conferences, and a system of error analysis are presented as effective measures which enhance individual development as well as encourage more student writing.

Noting that research has shown teacher comment has little effect on the quality of student writing, Grant-Davie and Shapiro (1987) suggest teachers should view comments as rhetorical acts, think about their purpose for writing them, and teach students to become their own best readers. To achieve this goal, teachers should respond to student drafts with fewer judgments and directives and more questions and suggestions. Grant-Davie and Shapiro also outline the use of a workshop which utilizes peer editing and revision.

Similarly, Whitlock (1987) explains how Peter Elbow's concepts of pointing, summarizing, telling, and showing can form the basis of an effective method for training students to work in writing groups and give reader-based feedback to peer writing.

Measuring Writing Quality

According to the Standards for Basic Skills Writing Programs developed by the National Council of Teachers of English and reprinted in National Standards: Oral and Written Communications (1984), when we measure the quality of students' writing we should focus on before and after samplings of complete pieces of writing.

To measure growth in the use of these conventions, an analytic scale analysis of skills (Cooper and Odell, 1977) can be developed and used effectively with samples of students' writing. This instrument describes briefly, in non-technical language, what is considered to be high, mid, and low quality levels in the following areas: (1) the student's ability to use words accurately and effectively; (2) the ability to use standard English; (3) the ability to use appropriate punctuation; and (4) the ability to spell correctly. Each of these skills is ranked for each paper on a continuum from 1 (low) to 6 (high) (Hyslop, 1983).

In addition to these instruments, various teacher/writers in the field share the following strate-

Nancy B. Hyslop has taught writing both at the secondary and the university level, most recently at the University of Evansville.

gies they have developed for measuring writing quality.

Teale (1988) insists that informal observations and structured performance sample assessments are more appropriate than standardized tests for measuring quality in early childhood literacy learning. For example, when young children are asked to write and then read what they have written, the teacher can learn a great deal about their composing strategies and about their strategies for encoding speech in written language. Krest (1987) provides helpful techniques of a general nature to show teachers how to give students credit for all their work and how to spend less time doing it. These techniques involve using holistic scoring, using a somewhat similar technique of general comments, and using the portfolio. Harmon (1988) suggests that teachers should withhold measuring students' progress until a suitable period of time has elapsed which allows for measurable growth, and then measure the quality of selected pieces of writing at periodic intervals.

Cooper and Odell (1977) suggest that teachers can eliminate much of the uncertainty and frustration of measuring the quality of these samples if they will identify limited types of discourse and create exercises which stimulate writing in the appropriate range but not beyond it. In their model, they present explanatory, persuasive, and expressive extremes as represented by the angles of the triangle. Each point is associated with a characteristic of language related to a goal of writing, with assignments and the resulting measure of quality focused on that particular goal.

Current Directions

Writing teachers are moving increasingly toward this type of assessment of writing quality. Hittleman (1988) offers the following four-part rating scale to be used after the characteristic to be evaluated is established: (1) little or no presence of the characteristic; (2) some presence of the characteristic; (3) fairly successful communication...through detailed and consistent presence of characteristic; and (4) highly inventive and mature presence of the characteristic.

Krest (1987) presents an interesting modification of this process by measuring the quality of students' papers with the following levels of concerns in mind: (HOCs) high order concerns: focus, details, and organization; (MOCs) middle order concerns: style and sentence order; and (LOCs) lower order concerns: mechanics and spelling.

Skills Analysis

One of the 29 standards for assessment and evaluation in the NCTE report states that control of the conventions of edited American English...spelling, handwriting, punctuation, and grammatical usage...(should be) developed primarily during the writing process and secondarily through related exercises.

All in all, it appears that true growth in writing is a slow, seldom linear process. Writing teachers have a wide variety of responses they can offer students before making formal evaluations of the text (Harmon 1988).

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ERIC Digest

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The Issue: Adult Literacy Assessment

by Elizabeth Metz

Literacy assessment is a multifaceted issue in adult education. Much of the problem occurs because there is no one definition of literacy. Currently, literacy seems to be equated with functional literacy, but does this mean illiterates can't function well enough to hold any job, or a particular job? Or, does it mean that they can't read prescription labels, warnings on household chemicals, labels in the grocery store, or street signs? Or, maybe it means they can't write a letter to a friend. There are almost as many definitions of functional illiteracy as there are adult illiterates because it is a personal issue. The common thread is the "desire to gain control of their lives" (Johnson, 1988, from Tuiman, 1987, quoting Luria, 1976).

The variety of definitions is reflected in the vast array of adult education programs such as those offered through public school districts, state education offices, Literacy Volunteers of America, Laubach, public libraries, industry, and the federal government tied to the Job Training Partnership Act and the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Health and Human Services, Interior, Justice, and Labor (Newman, 1986). Some programs are learner centered, some competency based and some job centered. The instructors may be anywhere on a continuum from volunteers who have received only a few hours' training to certified professional adult educators.

Assessment Methods?

How does one assess literacy under such circumstances? Chall states that "there are few tests specifically meant for adults (and) there seems to be a hesitation in using them" (quoted in French, 1987). One commonly used test, TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education), until recently was normed on children and most are scored using grade level equivalents. This is a "legacy from our definition of literacy as a level of achievement" (French, 1987). French suggests that informal testing would be one direction to follow which would allow for a "more personal perspective." One common goal should be that "assessment integrates both curriculum and student-identified goals and needs" (Hines, 1988).

Some Adult Literacy Programs

Time to Read is a national volunteer literacy program designed by Time Inc. Tutoring programs, both group and one-on-one, are built around respect for the learner and his/her interests. The learner's progress is assessed through activity sheets, answer keys and recording forms. Pre-post reading tests and self-assessment instruments are also used. *Time to Read* considers that the "key to effective assessment of learner progress (is the) close interaction between tutors and learners" (Cardwell, 1988).

The Center for Literacy, Philadelphia, provides a curriculum based on the individual learner's goals, interests and needs. Underlying assumptions are that literacy is social and that the learners come with their own goals and objectives; have their own perception of literacy, teaching, and learning; develop ideas about literacy from assessment measures; and build expectations by the method of assessment. *The Center for Literacy* uses planning conferences during the intake session and every six months for assessment. Items such as the learner's everyday life, reading and writing strategies, interests, perceptions of reading and writing, and goals are taken into consideration. A portfolio of the learner's accomplishments and current work is kept and completion is measured in relation to the learner's goals. The advantages are felt to be: a direct translation to instruction, emphasis on what the learner can do, a focus on motivating personal

Elizabeth Metz is Supervisor of the Reading Practicum at Indiana University.

goals, elimination of test anxiety, communication of respect, and the active role of the learner. The limitations are the lack of quantitative information, the time taken, and the need for greater staff expertise. (For a short-term longitudinal study of 76 adults enrolled in this program see Lytle and others, 1986.)

The Federal Prison System (Muth, 1988) reading programs are standardized test oriented. Inmates take the ABLE (Adult Basic Learning Examination) on entry into the system. If they score less than 8.0 (grade level) on any subtest, they are required to attend Adult Basic Education classes for 90 days. The problem the prison system has seen with the use of ABLE is that each institution develops its own program. There is a movement to a skills core curriculum that focuses on skills assessed by ABLE, although this has aroused some controversy.

Project: *LEARN*, Cleveland, (Oakley, 1988) uses volunteer tutors trained in the use of Laubach materials. (For a discussion of the Laubach program see Meyer and Keefe, 1988.) Assessment of learners begins at the intake interview through an attempt to see how well the learners can do the early lessons. The Project: *LEARN* personnel did a one-time study (1982-3) of the use of ABLE and found it to be time consuming and expensive. They also felt that the ABLE does not test what they teach, that their learners felt anxiety, and that the norming population did not match theirs. They are now using the WRAT (Wide Range Achievement Test) and the learners' goals, which give them a baseline for later assessment (Oakley, 1988).

The City University of New York Adult Literacy Program (Oppenheim, 1988) specifies that standardized tests should be only one component of assessment. Student survey results, anecdotal reports, and the learner's own writing are included in assessment. The learner is given the TABE upon entry and after 100 hours of instruction. There is also a structured interview in which the learner's goals, preferred learning style, and learning objectives are noted. Currently, several other methods of assessment are being studied.

The Greece Central School District Continuing Education Division, North Greece, New York, also uses the TABE, as well as assessing their learners at entry through interviews by teacher/counselors. Both aspects are felt to be necessary, especially the informal and non-threatening interview. Assessment then becomes ongoing, using a diagnostic-prescriptive model (Rupert, 1988).

CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System) is used in all California programs that receive federal Adult Basic Education Act 306 funds. Assessment is "linked directly to (203) identified competency statements across a continuum of difficulty" (Rickard, 1988; Rickard and Stiles, 1985) which are updated annually. All the materials used in the program are coded to this list. When learners first enter the program, their needs and skills are assessed through an interview. They are then placed in an appropriate class and given the *CASAS* Pretest and post-tested after 100 hours of instruction. *CASAS* users feel that it works well, since all aspects of the program are integrated with the competencies. The difficulty has been in record keeping, a problem they hope to solve with use of a computerized management system.

The Literacy Volunteers of America-Danbury, CT assess all learners using LVA READ on entry and again after 6 months or 50 hours of instruction. The students are also asked what they want to accomplish. The tutor is encouraged to "constantly listen to expressed desires and needs as tutoring progresses" (Stark, 1988). Achievement of goals is measured not only through an objective instrument but also through the successful completion of a life skill. As tutors do not always record these latter achievements from failure to understand their importance, the program wants to develop competency-based education.

California Literacy Campaign is a statewide library-based program (Solorzano, 1988; Strong, 1986). Each site is encouraged to develop a program that fits the needs of its unique area. In response to the need for better learner assessment, the California Adult Learner Progress Evaluation Process (CALPEP) was developed to measure learner progress through changes in "learners' reading and writing habits, learner perceptions of reading and writing progress, and goal attainment" (Solorzano, 1988). CALPEP is utilized at entry and at six month intervals. Progress is charted by both tutors and learners.

Assessment Tools

From the above it is obvious there is a wide variance in assessment tools used and views of them. There does seem to be a general acknowledgement that what is available needs improvement. Standardized tests do not appear to be the answer as they are related to former failure, give a one-sided view of a multi-sided problem, and often do not measure anything which pertains to the goals of the learner. Competency-based programs also have a similar problem as they tend to be imposed on a learner.

Assessment of the adult learner apparently needs to be on an informal basis. The cultural, phys-

iological, psychological and educational characteristics of the learner should be noted through a series of informal interviews over a period of several sessions. Learner interests and goals should be discussed on an ongoing basis by the tutor and learner.

While these methods of assessment will probably take more time than a standardized test and formal intake interview, the results would be worth the extra time. Rapport would be built between learner and tutor, the self-image of the learner would be enhanced, and the goals and needs of the individual learner would be met. Success would be built into the program. Progress would be noted as each goal of the learner is reached and new goals would be established as part of an ongoing assessment program.

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How Well Do Tests Measure Real Reading?

by Janet L. Powell

Despite a significant increase in test usage across the country, numerous issues surrounding the testing of reading remain unresolved. (See Johnston, 1986.) How validly it reflects what people actually do when they read is the most important consideration of any reading test. Construct validity—whether the test actually measures aspects of the behavior under consideration—is of particular importance if one is to rely on test scores to direct instruction, predict performance, or determine accountability. In 1917, Thorndike (see 1971 reprint), who defined reading as reasoning, helped promote the examination of reading as a cognitive process as thought guided by printed symbols (Farr and Roser, 1979).

Are We Measuring Process?

This slowly but continually emerging trend to recognize reading as a thinking process has been at the core of the controversies over the validity of various forms of reading assessment. Many critics of reading tests claim that most current approaches to the assessment of reading comprehension remain—as they have always been—measures of reading comprehension as a product of a reader's interaction with a text. Unable to assess the processes involved in comprehension, the tests measure comprehension as required responses that are the products of reading (Johnston, 1983).

Virtually all methods of assessing reading are indirect, even those that *claim* to directly assess reading *processes*. We cannot actually see the processes involved; we can only infer how a reader has comprehended. Therefore, all scores or data produced by tests of reading are indirect measures of the reading process.

The product of reading should, however, reflect the process the test-taker uses to generate the responses that produce a reading comprehension test score. That is to say that one ought to be able to assume that differences in test scores across test-takers and testing instances will reflect differences in the processes used to read the test passage and to respond as directed. How *directly* the two relate has never been determined; nor do we know how effectively test results can inform and direct the teaching of reading behaviors—even when those behaviors appear to be very similar to those that produce the test product. How well tests that do not emphasize or examine product might direct instruction that purports to develop process is a matter understood even less.

Farr (1986) states that "the manuals of most standardized tests make very explicit the fact that the test will not provide information about a pupil's reading *processes*, but only information about the *product* of reading." However, he continues by saying that "...one could argue that the product—or score—isn't valid if a pupil doesn't use the actual processes of reading in determining the answers." The validity question that surrounds the tests thus seems to be whether or not taking the test *appears* to change the processes involved in comprehension and to solicit significantly atypical reading processes.

Metacognition Focuses on Process

A reader's awareness of thought processes involved in reading has recently come to be known as *metacognition*, and test designers are now including items that supposedly measure this (Aronson and Farr, 1988). The general knowledge of the reader guides him or her in monitoring comprehension processes through the selection and implementation of specific strategies to achieve some predetermined goal or purpose for reading. The chief idea involved in metacognition is that learners must actively monitor their use of thinking processes—that they must be aware of how they are processing

information—and that they can then regulate them according to the purpose for reading.

The interest in metacognition among reading educators has led to an exploration of procedures to collect data on thinking processes. Data collection on mental processes has become known as *introspective data—concurrent* and *retrospective* verbal reports. Concurrent verbal reports are collected *as the subject is engaged in the reading task.* These types of reports have been criticized for interfering with the normal processes of reading (Nisbett and Wilson, 1977; Garner, 1982). Retrospective verbal reports are collected after the subject has completed the reading task. These types of reports have been criticized because subjects may forget or inaccurately recall the mental processes they employed while completing the task (Afflerbach and Johnston, 1984).

There are differences of opinion as to the validity and reliability of verbal report data in general. However, many prominent researchers agree that verbal reports, when they are elicited with care and interpreted with full understanding of the circumstances under which they were obtained, are valuable and thoroughly reliable sources of information about cognitive processes (Afflerbach and Johnston, 1984).

Verbal Reports May Reveal Reading Processes

Research that focuses on the metacognitive aspects of reading while taking a reading test comprise only a very small portion of the literature. At least three studies, however, have used verbal reports to investigate reading processes as subjects are engaged in taking reading comprehension tests. Using concurrent verbal reports, Wingenbach (1984) examined the comprehension processes employed by twenty gifted readers in grades 4 through 7 to identify the metacognitive strategies they employed as they read the *Iowa Test of Basic Skills,* a multiple-choice standardized reading test.

Wingenbach found that subjects reported using a variety of reading strategies to comprehend the text and to answer the questions. The strategies included using context clues, rereading, inferencing, personal identification with the text, and imagery. Wingenbach did not use as a comparison any other text types, making it impossible to determine whether or not the subject's mental processing was different on the test than on any other reading task.

Alvermann and Ratekin (1982) conducted a study with 98 "average" seventh-grade and eighth-grade subjects. The subjects completed a multiple-choice test and an essay test. Only retrospective reports were collected. Results of an analysis of the verbal protocols revealed that 55 subjects reported using only one reading strategy, while 30 reported using two or more. Thirteen subjects were unable to recall any specific strategy. In the report, Alvermann and Ratekin elaborate only on the statistically significant differences in strategies. They found that subjects who read to respond on an essay test "reread" more frequently than students who read the same passage knowing they will respond to multiple-choice items. In addition, subjects who read to complete an essay test reported using multiple strategies nearly twice as often as students who read for a multiple-choice test.

Other differences that were not statistically significant, may be important nevertheless. An examination of a chart representing the frequency of reported strategies shows that students read for details twice as often in the multiple-choice test as they did in the essay test. There were four reports of imaging (forming a picture of the text) in the essay test compared to one in the multiple-choice test. Subjects made a personal connection with the text an average of seven times when taking the multiple-choice test but only three during the essay test.

The use of only retrospective verbal reports severely limits the conclusions made by the researchers. When retrospection alone is used, the chances that the subjects forgot the mental processes they employed are greatly enhanced. In addition, the differences found may have been due to individual or group differences rather than task-related differences. There is little information in the report to support that the two groups were equivalent.

Powell (1988) conducted a study with nine proficient sixth-grade readers. All the subjects were observed, and they provided concurrent verbal reports as they were engaged in multiple-choice tests, cloze tests, written retellings, and a nonassessed reading task. The subjects gave retrospective verbal reports afterward. Twenty-one reading processes were identified from the verbal reports. The overall conclusions of this investigation indicated that the reading processes did differ as subjects were engaged in each of the tasks. The task which elicited behavior the most different from the other three was the cloze test. Subjects reported rereading and using context clues a great deal more on this task than on any of the others. They tied prior knowledge to the text and paraphrased the text a great deal less than in performing the other reading tasks.

The multiple-choice test and the written retellings,on the other hand, were very similar to each other and to the nonassessed reading task. The

subjects reported tying prior knowledge in with the text, visualizing what was happening in the text, and paraphrasing the text almost with equal frequency across all three tasks. Therefore, within the limitations of the Powell study, it can be concluded that multiple-choice tests and written retellings had construct validity. While the scores (products) of these tests may not reveal direct information on the processes students use to complete them, the tasks do appear to involve mental processes that have long been associated with reading.

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Note-taking: What Do We Know about the Benefits?

by Jeff Beecher

Research on note-taking has generated debates since C. C. Crawford began his studies in the 1920s. Initially the debates centered on whether note-taking resulted in improved student performance on tests. Over the years, researchers have tried to verify that note-taking helps students "encode" the information involved and that notes are valuable as materials for review (Ladas, 1980).

The research findings on whether note-taking promotes encoding have been mixed. Hult *et al.* (1984), for example, found that note-taking does involve semantic encoding; but Henk and Stahl (1985) found that the process of taking notes in itself does little to enhance recall. They found, however, that reviewing notes clearly results in superior recall. Their conclusions were dramatically different from those of Barnett *et al.* (1981), who found "strong support" for the encoding function of note-taking but not for the value of using notes to review material.

Does Note-taking Promote Encoding?

In 1925, Crawford published a study which sought to verify his observation that there is a positive correlation between analyses of college students' lecture notes and their grades on subsequent quizzes. He concluded that taking notes was better than not taking notes, that reviewing notes was a key to their impact, and that organizing notes effectively contributes to improved performance on tests.

After a lull in note-taking research, Ash and Carlton (1953) worked with instructional films and concluded that films lacking necessary pauses and repetitions led to note-taking attempts which actually interfered with listening comprehension and learning. McClendon (1958) used taped lectures and concluded that note-taking doesn't interfere with listening, that no particular note-taking method is best, and that students might as well record as much as possible during note-taking.

In 1970, Howe concluded that students were seven times more likely to recall information one week after it was presented if the information had been recorded in their notes. Howe argued that "the activity of note writing *per se* makes a contribution to later retention...." (p. 63)

Di Vesta and Gray (1972) observed that "note taking* and rehearsal function as learning aids which facilitate learning" (p. 134), while Fisher and Harris (1974) found that students perform better when they are allowed "to encode in the way that they prefer" (p. 386)—using notes or other strategies.

There is growing evidence that note-taking combined with critical thinking facilitates retention and applications of the information. Bretzing and Kulhary (1979) compared note-taking that indicated in-process semantic processing (encoding) with verbatim note-taking and found that subjects who took verbatim notes scored lower on comprehension tests than those who processed information at a higher level while they took notes. Einstein *et al.* (1985) found that successful college students engaged in greater integrative processing during note-taking, and that note-taking itself "enhances organizational processing of lecture information." (p. 522)

Anderson and Armbruster (1986) concluded that there is a benefit to students when the lecture environment permits deep processing while taking

**Over the years the term* note-taking *has been spelled several ways. Webster's Third New International (1986) lists it only with the hyphen, but* notetaker *as one word.*

notes. Denner (1986) describes a method of using "episodic organizers"—a kind of semantic web or map—to produce a positive encoding effect when seventh-grade subjects were reading complex narrative passages.

Is Reviewing Notes an Effective Learning Strategy?

The importance of reviewing notes was mentioned briefly by Crawford in 1925. In 1973, Fisher and Harris concluded that "note taking serves both an encoding function and an external memory function [reviewing], with the latter being the more important." (p. 324) Kiewra (1983) found that reorganizing notes *while reviewing* led to higher test achievement. The Cornell system of note-taking encourages this practice (King *et al.*, 1984).

In a report on their study which allowed students to review their notes immediately before a test, Carter and Van Matre (1975) argued that the benefit of note-taking appeared to be derived from the review rather than from the act of note-taking itself. They even went so far as to suggest that reviewing notes may actually cue the student to reconstruct parts of the lecture not initially recorded in the notes. An interesting study by Kiewra (1985) also endorsed the value of review—but not of student notes. He suggested that "Teachers should be aware of students' relatively incomplete note-taking behaviours, and therefore, encouraged *to provide* learners with adequate notes for review." (p. 77; emphasis added)

What Does the Research Suggest to the Teacher?

An increasing number of sources try to synthesize the implications of research on note-taking to benefit and advise educators (e.g., Kiewra, 1987). Much of the synthesis relates directly to teacher/instructor presentation of material. Earlier researchers had offered such suggestions: Ash and Carlton (1953) recommended that students be supplied with prepared notes for pre-film and post-film study. Based on his study of college students' notes, Locke (1977) suggested stressing the importance of material that is not written on the board, announcing explicitly the precise role that lectures play in the course, and combating student fatigue by providing a rest break. (p. 98)

In his underlining and note-taking research synthesis for students and teachers, McAndrew (1983) suggested that instructors use a spaced lecture format, insert verbal and nonverbal cues into lectures to highlight structure, write important material on the blackboard, avoid information overload when using transparencies or slides, tell students what type of test to expect, and use handouts that give students room to add notes. Carrier and Titus (1981) asked teachers to devote some class time exclusively to a review period before an exam—an emphasis like that placed on reviewing by Carter and Van Matre (1975), who had also stressed highly organized lectures.

What Are the Current Research Interests?

Note-taking research, along with educational research in general, has begun to concentrate on the cognitive processes of individual learners (Kiewra and Frank, 1985). The relevance of schema theory (Shaughnessy and Evans, 1986) and of metacognition (Tomlinson, 1985) has been studied in recent years.

Kiewra and Benton (1988) have been studying "the relationship between lecture note-taking behaviors and academic ability by using more global measures of ability, such as GPA and predictive achievement test scores. In addition, they have considered a) scores on an information-processing ability test, b) analysis of notes taken during a designated lecture, c) scores on a test based on a lecture, and d) scores on a course exam covering several lectures. They concluded that the "amount of notetaking is related to academic achievement" and the "ability to hold and manipulate propositional knowledge in working memory is related to the number of words, complex propositions, and main ideas recorded in notes." (p. 33)

Thus while most note-taking research continues to measure the impact of note-taking on recall as measured by tests, there is increasing emphasis on cognitive analyses that may have more explicit instructional implications in the near future.

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Large Scale Writing Assessment

by Holly O'Donnell

A national concern over the decline in students' writing scores (as revealed in National Assessment of Educational Progress reports), serious doubts about what some of those scores signify, and a shift in focus from writing product to writing process in research and classroom practice have each given impetus to the change from indirect measures of writing proficiency (those that use "objective" test items) to direct measures (those that call for student writing samples). In their 1981 national survey, McCready and Melton found that of the twenty-four states claiming to have a writing assessment program, twenty-two require a writing sample as part of the assessment. Only two states rely solely on the use of objective tests.

Large scale writing assessments, however, involve a number of complex issues that are not always evident to decision makers who are not specialists in measurement. In discussing how to and how not to conduct an assessment of student writing, McCaig (1982) warns that "an assessment plan which is incomplete or poorly conceived may produce findings which can be challenged and even dismissed as meaningless by critics who can document flaws in the process." This digest (1) outlines some of the approaches used in the implementation of large scale writing assessments, (2) examines some of the issues and problems surrounding the use of student writing samples, and (3) reports on various trends in state writing assessment projects.

Direct Versus Indirect Assessment

Direct and indirect writing assessments are radically different approaches focusing on different components of writing. Indirect measurements typically use multiple choice tests to assess the student's understanding of mechanics or language conventions: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, sentence construction, organization, and so on. Direct assessments, on the other hand, assess actual writing performance, since they require the students to produce a writing sample. Spandel and Stiggins (1981) suggest that the two approaches can best be compared in terms of their advantages and disadvantages.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Direct	• extent of information provided about the students' writing proficiency • fidelity to real world writing tasks • potential for positive user attitudes • relatively low test development cost • high face validity	• potential lack of uniformity regarding proficiencies assessed • high cost of scoring
Indirect	• high score reliability • relatively low scoring cost • high degree of control over skills tested	• lack of fidelity to real world writing tasks • reliance on reading • lack of face validity

Participants at a conference on assessment issues agreed that the use of writing samples is essential because of the instructional implications (McCready and Melton 1981). That is, if teachers know that students' writing ability will be evaluated by means of a direct measure, they will encourage more writing in the classroom.

Three Approaches to Scoring

Provided that writing assessments are conducted to determine the status of writing in a given

state or school system and provided they are conducted to help improve classroom instruction, several factors need to be considered prior to the collection of writing samples: (1) the educational decisions to be made, on the basis of test results; (2) the writing purpose, audience, and type of writing to be required; and (3) the specific skills or traits to be judged along with the criteria used for evaluating writing performance (Spandel and Stiggins 1981). It must also be remembered that ratings will vary depending upon the scoring procedure used. Quellmalz, in writing about scoring criteria (1982), notes that "criteria employed for evaluation students writing vary along a number of dimensions: from qualitative to quantitative; from general to specific; from comprehensive, full discourse features to isolated features; from vague guidelines to replicable, objective guidelines. "Scoring options range from holistic scoring (general impressionistic marking) to analytic and primary trait scoring.

Holistic Scoring

Holistic scoring of a writing sample is based upon the reader's overall impression of the effectiveness of a piece of writing. Papers are scored by trained raters on a numerical scale, usually a four-point scale. Once the writing samples are collected, the raters or scorers sort the samples into four stacks, relating the quality of the essay only to other papers in the group rather than to a predetermined example of "good" writing. Papers are typically read by two raters, and the scores they assign a writing sample are summed into a total score. If there is a discrepancy of two score points, the score is reconciled by yet a third reader/rater.

Primary Trait Scoring

Primary trait scoring focuses on a specific rhetorical characteristic or trait of a given piece of writing. It is based on the premises that all writing is done in terms of a specific audience and that writing, if successful, will have the desired effect on that audience. Lloyd-Jones (1977) identifies two goals of primary trait scoring: (1) to define what segment of discourse will be evaluated (e.g., explanatory, expressive, persuasive), and (2) to train readers to render holistic judgments accordingly. A scoring guide for primary trait analysis may consist of the exercise itself; a description of the rhetorical traits of the writing; an interpretation of the exercise indicating how each element in the task is expected to affect the student; an interpretation of how the situation of the exercise is related to the primary trait; sample papers that are representative of each score point; and a discussion of why each sample paper was scored as it was (McCready and Melton 1981). One difference between holistic and primary trait scoring is that with primary trait scoring, students' papers are being measured against external criteria, whereas with holistic scoring, papers are compared with one another.

Analytical Scoring

If primary trait scoring is a situation-specific analysis of writing, analytical scoring is a thorough, trait-by-trait analysis. The identified traits reflect those components of a writing sample that are considered important to any piece of writing in any context. Diederich (1974), the originator of analytical scoring, for example, has identified eight common traits: ideas, organization, wording, flavor (tone), usage, punctuation, spelling, and handwriting. Others may use traits more general such as content, organization, focus and support, and mechanics. If enough components are analyzed, this scoring procedure can provide a comprehensive picture of writing performance. However, the components need to be explicit and well defined so that the raters understand and agree upon the basis for making judgments about the writing sample.

In relating these scoring approaches to classroom applications, Spandel (1981) observes that holistic scoring offers a broad base for a discussion of what makes a piece of writing generally good or bad. Analytical scoring can take this discussion one step further by identifying those traits of components that make a piece of writing effective. And, by being situation-specific, primary trait scoring focuses on the importance of audience to a piece of writing.

Issues and Problems

Essential to the quality of assessment and the value of scoring procedures used are the reliability and validity of the scores generated by the assessment. Specifically, the scoring criteria should be applicable uniformly within a rating session and from one rating session to another. Furthermore, these ratings should correlate with other measures of student writing. Even if the assessment instrument is reliable and valid, spurious scores can result from the development of poor exercises, poor test administration or environment, or poor scoring procedures (Stiggins, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory 1980). Scorers must understand and agree upon the criteria applied to a piece of writing. Thus, inadequate training of scorers may also influence or skew the results of an assessment.

The choice of topic (or "prompt") to be written is another factor that may influence scores. Students may write more enthusiastically on some topics

than on others, resulting in better quality writing. A student's background and prior knowledge will also affect the "expertise" a student brings to a piece of writing. Or, depending upon the student's interpretation of a writing prompt, he or she may write persuasive discourse in response to a prompt intended for expository discourse.

Time and cost are two other factors that may influence the decision for large scale writing assessment. Stiggins (Northwest Regional Education Laboratory 1980) separates cost factors into those that are developmental and those that are administrative. Developmental costs will vary depending on whether a previously designed assessment instrument is used or a new one developed. If one is to forego the expense of constructing a new scoring instrument, expense will still be incurred for the securing, reviewing, evaluating, and selecting of appropriate exercises and scoring guides that do exist. Administrative costs involve those associated with test administration, the selection of test administrators, the distribution of materials, and the collection of test materials.

Then there are the scoring costs-the time required to train raters and the time required to rate papers. According to data collected by Quellmalz (1982), the training time for holistic and primary trait scoring averages two to four hours, and for analytical scoring averages six to eight hours. Test reuse is another cost factor. Stiggins (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory 1980) states that "with indirect assessment, the high cost of test construction can be amortized over repeated administration and the recurring scoring costs are very low. However, with direct assessment, although the initial development costs are low, the scoring costs remain high with each use." In a 1982 dissertation Bauer compared the reliabilities and the cost-efficiencies of these three methods of direct assessment. Based on her results, Bauer concluded that the analytical method was the most reliable and the holistic method was the most cost-efficient in grading a large number of essays (ED 225 171).

A 1979 study by Fredrick identified some of the problems that states have encountered with their writing assessment endeavors: (1) arrangements for a place large enough and suitable enough for the scoring, (2) coordinating release time for teachers to act as scorers, (3) adhering to a rigid time schedule during the scoring session, (4) not enough time or money, and (5) finding or designing a variety of writing skill tasks. Her survey concluded with a list of recommendations to others who are planning a writing assessment, some of which are as follows:

- formulate writing objectives and focus research questions before the assessment,
- use language arts specialists to advise on content and to react to items prior to pilot testing,
- clarify traits to be measured,
- include clear and concise directions, and
- use actual performance on practical writing, such as messages, letters, forms and so forth, instead of the proofreading type of assessment found inmost multiple choice tests.

Trends in Writing Assessment

A national study conducted in 1981 by McCready and Melton collected data from 42 state departments of education. Of the 22 states using a writing sample, most of the states indicated that they used holistic scoring procedures, with three states using primary trait techniques, one using analytical, and three states using both holistics and analytic scoring. In fact, when comparing their study with the earlier study by Fredrick (1979), McCready and Melton, they found a change in preference from either holistic or primary trait scoring to a use of holistic and analytical methods, which appeared to offer a broader base for determining basic competencies in writing and assessing educational progress.

The May 1984 issue of CAPTRENDS, published by the Center for Performance Assessment, reveals diverse environments for the solicitation of writing samples. Some states used untimed writing sample, while others set 25-minute limit. Some states allowed students to revise their initial drafts, while yet another state offered less skilled writers a number of prewriting suggestions to help them get started.

Large scale writing assessments are useful, but complex. This digest has attempted to identify a few of the issues and problems that need to be addressed in such an endeavor. However, as Spandel and Stiggins conclude in their booklet, *Direct Measures of Writing Skills: Issues and Applications. Revised Edition* (1981), "There is not now, nor will there ever be, a single best way to assess writing skills. Each individual educational assessment and writing circumstance presents unique problems to the developer and use of writing tests. Therefore, great care must be taken in selecting the approach and the methods to be used in each writing assessment. Methods used in one context to measure one state of relevant writing skill should not be generalized to other writing contexts without careful consideration of writing circumstances."

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Dialogue Journals

by Jana Staton

Teachers who want to involve every student, even the most reluctant, in a literacy practice which unites reading and writing and encourages thinking and reflection, may want to consider incorporating dialogue journals into their classroom practice. Dialogue journals use writing as a genuine means of communication between each student and the teacher, to get things done in the common life they share in the classroom.

What Is a Dialogue Journal?

A dialogue journal is a bound composition book in which each student carries on a private written conversation with the teacher for an extended period of time (school year, semester). Unlike much school-assigned writing, which is often only for purposes of evaluation, dialogue journals are *functional, interactive,* mostly about *self-generated topics,* and deeply embedded in the continuing life of the classroom. Both persons write to each other in an informal, direct style about topics of mutual interest, usually on a daily basis at elementary level, two or three times a week for older students. In a school year, even primary students can fill several composition books.

Dialogue journals serve as a bridge between natural spoken conversation, with its participants and turns, and the traditional classroom tasks of essay and report writing. They also allow students to develop more coherent self-expression and a personal "voice"—both essential aspects of writing which are often lost when basic composition skills are stressed.

Dialogue journals were developed over many years by a sixth-grade teacher, Leslie Reed, in Los Angeles, to meet several needs—to get to know her students better, to get feedback on lessons, to improve classroom discipline, and to involve each student in meaningful reading and writing. Extensive classroom observations and text analyses of dialogue journals have been conducted with both native and nonnative speakers of English (Staton 1980; Staton et al. 1987; Kreeft et al. 1985). They are now being used with first- through sixth-graders, with second language learners, with high school and college students in various content areas (Atwell 1984) and with special education populations (Baites et al. 1986).

Some brief excerpts from dialogue journals in Leslie Reed's class are helpful for understanding their conversational, interactive nature.

Gordon: I did terrible on the math homework from last night. Math was totally terrible. I hate math. I really do hate it!

Mrs. R.: Come on! Give yourself a chance. You hate every new math idea and in a couple of days you're saying "I like this—it's easy!" You'll catch on—let me help!

Gordon: That is not true! I did not say that about fractions—did I?

******

Janinne: I wish I didn't win the Spelling Bee. I know I should be happy about winning but I feel worse than I ever did...I feel very much as if the whole world is against me. Even what I thought were my best of friends. The people I trusted now hate me. Why can't they understand?

Mrs. R.: It is difficult to understand—and I understand and share your weird feelings!...It is most difficult to be a good loser! Somehow being a loser you feel better if you can criticize or "tear down" the winner. The act of destroying the winner makes a poor loser feel better.

Although each entry is brief, from a few sentences to a page in length, the same topics tend to be discussed and elaborated on for several days, creating extended writing opportunities. Such writing works best when teachers understand the need for students to "own" their writing, allowing students to write about whatever concerns or topics they feel

are important on a given day. Students ask questions, complain about lessons, describe what happened on the playground or at home, reflect on why things happen, express personal feelings—in other words, they use written language in all the purposeful ways they use their spoken language.

What Are Some of the Benefits to Students?

Dialogue journals create a one-to-one relationship between student and teacher in which both academic and personal concerns may be discussed. The journals represent a concrete application of Vygotsky's theory that learning of functional human activities occurs first through the learner's cooperative participation in accomplishing tasks with a more experienced partner. What the learner can do with assistance today can be done unaided in the future. By creating a dialogue setting, the teacher supports the student's emerging reading and writing competencies and the acquisition of more complex reasoning skills (Kreeft 1984; Staton 1984).

But dialogue journals are not a method of instruction in specific skills; they provide opportunities to use newly acquired abilities in writing and reading. As with any truly individualized practice, each student benefits in a different way. Research has shown some of the following benefits:

1. Opportunities to engage in reflection about experiences and to think together with an adult about choices, problems, and ideas (Staton 1984).
2. Opportunities to engage in a natural, purposeful way in different kinds of writing—narration, description and argumentation, even poetry (Kreeft et al. 1985; Staton et al. 1987), and to use all the functions of language.
3. Opportunities to read a personalized text—that is, the teacher's written responses—about topics the student has initiated. The teacher's writing may often be more advanced and complex than textbooks that students are assigned to read (Gambrell 1985; Staton 1986).

Teachers of younger children find the dialogues particularly helpful in early stages of literacy instruction. The interactive dialogue, with just a few sentences each day, makes use of the young child's developed competence in oral language, as shown in this dialogue between a child (who is not yet a "reader," according to standardized tests) and her teacher, Marley Casagrande of Fairfax County.

Kelly: I like the little red hen and Dick and Jane. I have problems some times Well I have this problem it is I am not very good on my writing.

Mrs. C.: I think you are a good writer. Keep on trying. I like the Little Red Hen, too, Kelly. Keep on writing!

Kelly: Oh kay. Do you have a problem. if you do I will help you and what are you going to be for Halloween.

Mrs. C.: I am going to be a farmer. I will wear overalls and a straw hat. Everybody has problems, Kelly. Some problems are big and some are small. One of my small problems is I can't stop eating chocolate when I see it.

Studies also show that the more reluctant and least proficient writers are motivated to write in dialogue journals, and that this motivation can transfer to other writing tasks (Hays and Bahruth 1985). Over time, student entries increase in length, become more fluent, and show greater competency in focusing on a topic and elaborating on it (Station et al. 1986).

For the ESL learner, there is an added benefit to this daily, continuous conversation: the teacher's responses provide clear, comprehensible language for students to absorb subconsciously as a model for language acquisition (Kreeft et al. 1985). Teachers become competent at writing to an optimally challenging level for each student, varying their language to ensure comprehension (Kreeft et al. 1985)

Students have their own way of explaining the benefits of dialogue journals to themselves:

> The worksheets make you answer questions, but the dialogue journals makes *me* ask the questions, and then the teacher helps me think about possible answers. (Staton 1984)

What About the Time It Takes?

Incorporating dialogue journals into a teacher's daily schedule does take time, but that time is also useful for planning the next day's lessons, based in part on the information the dialogue journals provide. Teachers find that they enjoy responding in the journals and look forward to this time.

A second major benefit for teachers is that the dialogue journals seem to improve classroom management and discipline. The journals are a long-range technique for helping individual students learn how to manage their own actions. Teachers report that the individual dialogues help them reach students who are discipline problems or are often absent.

Dialogue, a newsletter on dialogue journals, is available from CLEAR (Center for Language Education and Research at the Center for Applied Linguistics), 1118 22nd Street NW, Washington, DC 20037. The list of several handbooks on the subject is now available (Baites et al. 1986).

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Assessing Listening and Speaking Skills

by Nancy A. Mead and Donald L. Rubin

Why Teach and Assess Listening and Speaking Skills?

Even though many students have mastered basic listening and speaking skills, some students are much more effective in their oral communication than others. And those who are more effective communicators experience more success in school and in other areas of their lives. The skills that can make the difference between minimal and effective communication can be taught, practiced, and improved.

The method used for assessing oral communication skills depends on the purpose of the assessment. A method that is appropriate for giving feedback to students who are learning a new skill is not appropriate for evaluating students at the end of a course. However, any assessment method should adhere to the measurement principles of reliability, validity, and fairness. The instrument must be accurate and consistent, it must represent the abilities we wish to measure, and it must operate in the same way with a wide range of students. The concerns of measurement, as they relate to oral communication, are highlighted below. Detailed discussions of speaking and listening assessment may be found in Powers (1984), Rubin and Mead (1984), and Stiggins (1981).

How Are Oral Communication and Listening Defined?

Defining the domain of knowledge, skills, or attitudes to be measured is at the core of any assessment. Most people define oral communication narrowly, focusing on speaking and listening skills separately. Traditionally, when people describe speaking skills, they do so in a context of public speaking. Recently, however, definitions of speaking have been expanded (Brown 1981). One trend has been to focus on communication activities that reflect a variety of settings: one-to-many, small group, one-to-one, and mass media. Another approach has been to focus on using communication to achieve specific purposes: to inform, to persuade, and to solve problems. A third trend has been to focus on basic competencies needed for everyday life—for example, giving directions, asking for information, or providing basic information in an emergency situation. The latter approach has been taken in the Speech Communication Association's guidelines for elementary and secondary students. Many of these broader views stress that oral communication is an *interactive* process in which an individual alternately takes the roles of speaker and listener, and which includes both verbal and nonverbal components.

Listening, like reading comprehension, is usually defined as a receptive skill comprising both a physical process and an interpretive, analytical process. (See Lundsteen 1979 for a discussion of listening.) However,this definition is often expanded to include critical listening skills (higher-order skills such as analysis and synthesis) and nonverbal listening (comprehending the meaning of tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures, and other nonverbal cues.) The expanded definition of listening also emphasizes the relationship between listening and speaking.

How Are Speaking Skills Assessed?

Two methods are used for assessing speaking skills. In the *observational* approach, the student's behavior is observed and assessed unobtrusively. In the *structured* approach, the student is asked to perform one or more specific oral communication tasks. His or her performance on the task is then evaluated. The task can be administered in a one-on-one setting—with the test administrator and one student—or in a group or class setting. In either setting, students should feel that they are communicating meaningful content to a real audience. Tasks

should focus on topics that all students can easily talk about, or, if they do not include such a focus, students should be given an opportunity to collect information on the topic.

Both observational and structured approaches use a variety of rating systems. A *holistic* rating captures a general impression of the student's performance. A *primary trait* score assesses the student's ability to achieve a specific communication purpose— for example, to persuade the listener to adopt a certain point of view. *Analytic* scales capture the student's performance on various aspects of communication, such as delivery, organization, content, and language. Rating systems may describe varying degrees of competence along a scale or may indicate the presence or absence of a characteristic.

A major aspect of any rating system is rater objectivity: Is the rater applying the scoring criteria accurately and consistently to all students across time? The reliability of raters should be established during their training and checked during administration or scoring of the assessment. If ratings are made on the spot, two raters will be required for some administrations. If ratings are recorded for later scoring, double scoring will be needed.

How Are Listening Skills Assessed?

Listening tests typically resemble reading comprehension tests except that the student listens to a passage instead of reading it. The student then answers multiple-choice questions that address various levels of literal and inferential comprehension. Important elements in all listening tests are (1)the listening stimuli, (2) the questions, and (3) the test environment.

The listening stimuli should represent typical oral language, and not consist of simply the oral reading of passages designed to be written material. The material should model the language that students might typically be expected to hear in the classroom, in various media, or in conversations. Since listening performance is strongly influenced by motivation and memory, the passages should be interesting and relatively short. To ensure fairness, topics should be grounded in experience common to all students, irrespective of sex and geographic, socioeconomic, or racial/ethnic background.

In regard to questions, multiple-choice items should focus on the most important aspects of the passage—not trivial details—and should measure skills from a particular domain. Answers designated as correct should be derived from the passage, without reliance on the student's prior knowledge or experience. Questions and response choices should meet accepted psychometric standards for multiple-choice questions.

An alternative to the multiple-choice test is a performance test that requires students to select a picture or actually perform a task based on oral instruction. For example, students might hear a description of several geometric figures and choose pictures that match the description, or they might be given a map and instructed to trace a route that is described orally.

The testing environment for listening assessment should be free of external distractions. If stimuli are presented from a tape, the sound quality should be excellent. If stimuli are presented by a test administrator, the material should be presented clearly, with appropriate volume and rate of speaking.

How Should Assessment Instruments Be Selected or Designed?

Identifying an appropriate instrument depends upon the purpose for assessment and the availability of existing instruments. If the purpose is to assess a specific set of skills—for instance, diagnosing strengths and weaknesses or assessing mastery of an objective—the test should match those skills. If appropriate tests are not available, it makes sense to design an assessment instrument to reflect specific needs. If the purpose is to assess communication broadly, as in evaluating a new program or assessing district goals, the test should measure progress over time and, if possible, describe that progress in terms of external norms, such as national or state norms. In this case, it is useful to seek out a pertinent test that has undergone careful development, validation, and norming, even if it does not exactly match the local program.

Several reviews of oral communication tests are available (Rubin and Mead 1984).The Speech Communication Association has compiled a set of *Resources for Assessment in Communication*, which includes standards for effective oral communication programs, criteria for evaluating instruments, procedures for assessing speaking and listening, an annotated bibliography, and a list of consultants.

Conclusions

The abilities to listen critically and to express oneself clearly and effectively contribute to a student's success in school and later in life. Teachers concerned with developing the speaking and listening communication skills of their students need methods for assessing their students' progress. These techniques range from observation and questioning to standardized testing. However, even the most informal methods should embrace the mea-

surement principles of reliability, validity, and fairness. The methods used should be appropriate to the purpose of the assessment and make use of the best instruments and procedures available.

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Strengthening Test-Taking and Study Strategies in Reading

by Jerry Johns and Susan J. Davis

Tests of all kinds are becoming more prevalent in schools today. Most students take a battery of classroom, achievement, and competency tests each year. Since educational decisions are often made on the basis of test results, it is essential that test data are valid indicators of student performance. Students who have poor test-taking skills, however, may not have test scores that reflect their actual performance.

This *FAST Bib* addresses the issue of teaching test-taking and study skills to students from the elementary through the secondary grades. The first section begins with an overview of programs and practices that have been used to teach test-taking skills. The second section presents citations of recent research on test-taking and study strategies, concentrating on studies that indicate strategies that can be effectively taught. The final section reports strategies that can be used by teachers, counselors, or parents to help students improve their study skills and test-taking ability.

Overview

Brueggemann, Louis V. "What Teachers Should Know about Test Wiseness," *Reading Horizons*, v27 n3 p159-63 Apr 1987.

Reviews research dealing with test wiseness and concludes that teachers and others who administer tests and those who review results should consider the degree to which test-wiseness characteristics might have been operative had a planned effort been undertaken to provide special instruction.

Koenke, Karl. "ERIC/RCS: Test Wiseness," *Journal of Reading*, v31 n5 p480-83 Feb 1988.

Provides a description of a variety of programs that teach test wiseness. Discusses problems and concerns of using test-wiseness programs.

Prell, Jo Ann; Prell, Paul. "Improving Test Scores—Teaching Test-Wiseness." Center on Evaluation and Research, Phi Delta Kappa, Bloomington, IN 1986. 5p. [ED 280 900]

Reviews practices commonly used to improve test scores. Discusses advantages of teaching students to take tests and gives suggestions on ways to teach test wiseness.

Recent Research

Benson, Jeri; and others. "Effects of Test-Wiseness Training and Ethnicity on Achievement of Third- and Fifth-Grade Students," *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, v18 n4 p154-62 Jan 1986.

Determines whether test-wiseness training influences the achievement of students in math and reading. Reports significant effects in math for fifth-grade students and race effects favoring white students.

Berliner, David; Casanova, Ursula. "Should Students Be Made Test-Wise?" *Instructor*, v95 n6 p22-23 Feb 1986.

Shows that most students who received test-wiseness training scored much higher than did students of equal ability who had no training. Finds that familiarity with the test format, the test-taking situation, and the conventions of the test contribute to good performance.

Christen, William L.; Murphy, Thomas J. "Learning How to Learn: How Important Are Study Skills?" *NASSP Bulletin*, v69 n483 p82-88 Oct 1985.

Surveys 479 graduating seniors from three different high schools. Reveals that the majority of the students were not adequately trained in study skills. Includes a copy of the survey questionnaire.

Dolly, John; Williams, Kathy. "Teaching Testwiseness." Paper presented at the Annual meeting of the Northern Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association, 1983. 15p. [ED 241 562]

Describes approaches used that may maximize guessing on multiple-choice exams. Discusses studies in which test wiseness was taught by using logical reasoning procedures that maximized guessing.

Feeley, Joan T.; Wepner, Shelley B. "Does Prior Knowledge Affect College Students' Performance on a State-Developed Reading Competency Test?" Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the College Reading Association, 1985. 17p. [ED 262 384]

Conducts a study (1) to determine the effects of direct exposure to the topics of the selections in the New Jersey College Basic Skills Placement Test (NJCBSPT) on their posttest scores; and (2) to investigate whether students exposed to the topics would indicate awareness of this knowledge on a teacher-made-measure—the Prior Knowledge Inventory (PKI). Concludes that treatment did not increase scores, but the reading program was beneficial for both groups.

Halpin, Gerald; and others. "Effects on Stanford Achievement Test Scores of Teaching Content versus Test-Taking Strategies." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, 1987. 13p. [ED 291 784]

Reports a study of first-grade students conducted to determine if a program designed to develop test-taking skills would result in higher standardized achievement test scores than would one focusing on the content assessed by the test. Finds that instructing students in test wiseness is as effective as intensive instruction in content.

Nolte, Ruth Yopp; Singer, Harry. "Active Comprehension: Teaching a Process of Reading Comprehension and Its Effects on Reading Achievement," *Reading Teacher*, v39 n1 p24-31 Oct 1985.

Concludes that teaching fourth- and fifth-grade children to ask themselves questions about key points in a story significantly improved their performance on tests about story content.

Perlman, Carole L.; and others. "Should They Read the Questions First? A Comparison of Two Test-Taking Strategies for Elementary Students." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, 1988. 15p. [ED 296 004]

Studies the usefulness of before-adjunct questions with standardized multiple-choice tests in increasing reading comprehension scores by examining the relative effectiveness of reading test questions first or reading the passage first. Reports a slight trend indicating that those who read the questions first outperformed the others on literal comprehension items, but the results were not conclusive. Stresses that it would not be appropriate to generalize these results beyond the 210 fourth graders in the study.

Powers, Stephen. "The Effect of Testwiseness on the Reading Achievement Scores of Minority Populations. Final Report." National Institute of Education, Washington, DC. 1982. 98p. [ED 222 549]

Investigates the effect of testwiseness on four ethnic populations: Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Anglo. Finds that students instructed in test wiseness had comparable gains on reading tests and that no ethnic group had a significantly different amount of testwiseness once reading ability and socioeconomic levels were controlled.

Scruggs, Thomas; and others. "An Analysis of Children's Strategy Use on Reading Achievement Tes[illegible]." *Elementary School Journal*, v85 n4 p479-84 Mar 1985.

Analyzes the results of previous studies of teaching test-taking skills to elementary students. Concludes that training is more effective for upper-elementary grades than lower-elementary grades and that the longer training programs are more effective.

Scruggs, Thomas E.; and others. "Learning Disabled Students' Spontaneous Use of Test-Taking Skills on Reading Achievement Tests," *Learning Disability Quarterly*, v8 n3 p205-10 Sum 1985.

Reports a study of third graders who were administered items from reading achievement tests and interviewed concerning strategies they employed and their level of confidence in each answer. Results indicated that LD students were less likely to report use of appropriate strategies on inferential questions and to attend carefully to specific format demands and that LD students reported inappropriately high levels of confidence.

Scruggs, Thomas, and others. "Teaching Test-Taking Skills to Elementary-Grade Students: A Meta-Analysis," *Elementary School Journal*, v87 n1 p69-82 Sep 1986.

Reports an investigation of the strategies of 31 elementary school students in answering reading questions from a standardized test. Notes that students use specific strategies and

suggests that test results can be improved by teaching those strategies.

Wilhite, Stephen C. "Multiple-Choice Test Performance: Effects of Headings, Questions, Motivation, and Type of Retention Test Question." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, 1986. 32p. [ED 271 736]

Examines the effect of headings and adjunct questions embedded in an expository text on the delayed multiple-choice test performance of 88 undergraduate students enrolled in psychology courses. Suggests that the appearance of any headings in the text may simply induce in subjects a strategy of trying to organize and interrelate the concepts in the text, and this strategy may then be applied to all sections of the passage regardless of whether they are preceded by a heading.

Teaching Strategies

Allen, Sheilah. "Conversing about Study Skills," *Highway One*, v9 n3 p34-41 Fall 1986.

Suggests ways of diagnosing problems in students' study habits and offers strategies for improving study skills and test-taking strategies.

Ellis, David B. "Becoming a Master Student." 1985. 343p. [ED 272 075]

Offers a guide to support student success in extended orientation courses, freshman seminars, and study skills classes using exercises such as journal-keeping, stories of 12 people who have mastered specific skills, practical suggestions, and forms and charts. Includes the following topics: time management, memory, reading, note-taking, test-taking, creativity, health, relationships, money management, and use of resources.

Gordon, Belita. "Teach Them to Read the Questions," *Journal of Reading*, v26 n2 p126-32 Nov 1982.

Suggests strategies teachers can offer students to help them understand test questions. Strategies require students to think about both the question and what could be in the passage.

Help Your Child Improve in Test-Taking. Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Washington, DC. 1987. 5p. [ED 280 899]

Describes techniques for developing children's ability to take tests. Provides suggestions for parents, check lists for reducing test anxiety, preparing for tests, taking tests, judging a child's progress, and encouraging good study habits.

"Study Skills: A Ready Reference for Teachers." Hawaii State Department of Education, Honolulu. 1988. 315p. [ED 297 276]

Provides practical strategies for teaching a wide range of study skills at the elementary and secondary grade levels. Presents an overview of study skills and strategies for various content areas and grade levels. Discusses guidelines for developing a study skills program, and includes a sample skills continuum chart, student self-assessment checklist, and teacher observation classroom checklist. Provides descriptions of strategies and sample applications for the following areas: (1) study habits; (2) listening skills; (3) reading skills; (4) vocabulary skills; (5) media utilization skills; (6) note-taking/outlining skills; (6) research skills; and (7) test-taking skills.

Integrating Learning and Testing: A Handbook for Teachers, Grade Six. Experimental Edition. 1985 Revision. New York City Board of Education, Brooklyn, N.Y. 1985. 276p. [ED 282 902]

Discusses testing and the testing program in New York State; (2) assists teachers and supervisors in planning and implementing an instructional test-taking program; (3) provides sample lessons that identify and explain test-taking skills, provide performance objectives, outline lesson activities, provide for follow-ups in several test formats, and provide practice tests; (4) develops cognitive skills, and (5) enables students to understand the format of tests.

Ritter, Shirley; Idol-Maestas, Lorna. "Teaching Middle School Students to Use a Test-Taking Strategy," *Journal of Educational Research*, v70 n6 p350-57 Jul-Aug 1986.

Suggests the SCORER learning strategies approach to teaching middle school students to take tests: Schedule, Clue, Omit, Read, Estimate, and Review. Results of SCORER use are discussed.

Focused Access to Selected topics No. 47
a FAST Bib by the
Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills

Reading and Writing Assessment in Middle and Secondary Schools

by Jerry Johns and Peggy VanLeirsburg

The increased emphasis on accountability at the national, state, and local levels requires educators to become more knowledgeable in the area of assessment. This *FAST Bib*, based on entries from the ERIC database, contains selected references from 1986 through 1989. The bibliography is organized into six sections: Overview, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)/ State-Mandated Testing, Standardized Tests, Informal Measures, Special Populations, and Content Area Assessment. The research and opinions contained in these citations are intended to help school personnel gain current information for reading and writing assessment in middle and secondary schools.

Overview

Hancock, Maxine. *Teaching and Evaluating Reading in the Senior High School. A Monograph to Accompany Reading 10*. 1988. 160p. [ED 293 110]

Provides background material as well as suggestions for implementing the Reading 10 program (a Canadian developmental reading course in secondary schools), which was designed to improve students' strategies for learning from text. Deals with structural, philosophical, and practical aspects of the Reading 10 course. Concludes with a report, Learning to Learn from Text: A Framework for Improving Classroom Practice.

Singer, Harry; Balow, Irving H. *Proficiency Assessment and Its Consequences. Final Report*. 1987. 82p. [ED 290 127]

Presents findings of several comparative and experimental studies that investigated three aspects of California's 1980 proficiency assessment: tests, remedial courses, and changes in implementation of the law. Offers recommendations to help school district proficiency programs result in more economical, more equitable, and higher quality education.

Willinsky, John; Bobie, Allen. When Tests Dare to Be Progressive: Contradictions in the Classroom. 1986. 16p. [ED 278 964]

Comments on statewide competency testing as a high school graduation requirement that represents a threat to those who encourage broad notions of reading and writing, even when some of the testing innovations in reading and writing mean a step forward in education. Contends that the compulsion of exam preparation remains a major source of distortion that can render even the most promising approach a rote and remote exercise.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)/State-Mandated Testing

Auchter, Joan Chikos; Patience, Wayne. Decentralized Large Scale Essay Scoring: Methods for Establishing and Evaluating Score Scale Stability and Reading Reliability. 1989. 41p. [ED 307 321]

Describes methods used by the General Educational Development Testing Services (GEDTS) to establish and maintain score stability and reading reliability on its direct assessment of writing. Illustrates importance of training readers and monitoring sites.

Beaton, Albert E. Sampling Design for the 1990 Trial State Assessment Program. 1989. 9p. [ED 306 298]

Raises questions about differences across states in sampling and administration of the trial state assessment program into the design of the 1990 NAEP.

Ferrara, Steven; and others. Local Assessment Responses to a State-Mandated Minimum-Competency Testing Program: Benefits and Drawbacks. 1988. 31p. [ED 294 892]

Describes assessment activities of four school districts in Maryland designed to parallel a state-mandated competency-testing program required for high school graduation and to report uses of

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scores and positive and negative impacts from assessment activities. Finds that: (1) teachers were enthusiastic about participating in item development and essay scoring; (2) increased emphasis on basic skills objectives, to the detriment of other learning outcomes, was exacerbated by parallel assessments; and (3) further consideration should be given to state involvement in the development and administration of competency tests.

Goldberg, Gail Lynn; Walker-Bartnick, Leslie. Designing a Review and Appeal Process for a Large Scale Writing Assessment Program. 1989. 21p. [ED 308 219]

Evaluates a pilot project of large-scale direct assessment of writing, the Maryland Writing Test (MWT). Reports data from 1987 and 1988 to indicate that MWT scores have a high degree of validity.

Kirsch, Irwin S.; Jungeblut, Ann. *Literacy: Profiles of America's Young Adults*. 1986. 79p. [ED 275 692]

Describes the 1985 NAEP assessing literacy skills of America's young adults. Finds that while the overwhelming majority of young adults adequately perform tasks at the lower levels on three literacy scales (prose, document, and quantitative literacy), a sizeable number of young adults appear unable to do well on tasks of moderate complexity.

Standardized Tests

Caldwell, JoAnne. Test Review: Reading Style Inventory, *Journal of Reading*, v30 n5 p440-44 Feb 1987.

Concludes that the test has basic problems in construction, interpretation, validity, and reliability.

Canney, George. Metropolitan Achievement Tests (MAT6) Reading Diagnostic Tests (Test Review), *Journal of Reading*, v33 n2 p148-50 Nov 1989.

Reviews the Reading Diagnostic Tests which form part of the battery of survey and diagnostic Metropolitan Achievement Tests. Finds the tests to be an impressive tool for diagnosing the reading strengths and weaknesses of elementary and junior high students.

Cooter, Robert B., Jr. Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, Third Edition. Levels 5/6, 7/9, and 10/12 (Test Review), *Journal of Reading*, v32 n7 p656-58 Apr 1989.

Reviews the third edition of this widely-used assessment instrument. Concludes that the test is reliable, quick and easy to administer, and that the publishers provide many special services. Lists liabilities as lack of validity evidence, omission of reading and study skills, and lack of distinctions among different types of reading comprehension.

Loyd, Brenda H.; Steele, Jeannie L. Assessment of Reading Comprehension: A Comparison of Constructs, *Reading Psychology*, v7 n1 p1-10 1986.

Investigates whether standardized tests measure the same comprehension construct as free recall assessment techniques.

Informal Measures

Duffelmeyer, Frederick A.; Duffelmeyer, Barbara Blakely. Main Idea Questions on Informal Reading Inventories, *Reading Teacher*, v41 n2 p162-66 Nov 1987.

Notes the problem that comprehension questions that claim to assess students' skills in finding main ideas may in fact be measuring their skill at identifying the topic of a passage.

Flint-Ferguson, Janis; Youga, Janet. Making Evaluation a Part of the Learning Process, *Journal of Reading*, v31 n2 p140-45 Nov 1987.

Lists suggestions for alternative methods of evaluation that will bring teaching and evaluation methods into close correspondence (as opposed to following creative teaching with a memorization test). Contends methods of evaluation should become part of the learning process, not just measure recall of information given by the teacher.

Fuchs, Lynn S.; and others. The Validity of Informal Reading Comprehension Measures, *Remedial and Special Education (RASE)*, v9 n2 p20-28 Mar-Apr 1988.

Assesses the criterion, construct, and concurrent validity of four informal reading comprehension measures (question answering tests, recall measures, oral passage reading tests, and cloze techniques) with 70 mildly and moderately retarded middle and junior high school boys. Indicates that the correct oral reading rate score demonstrated the strongest criterion validity.

Olson, Mary W.; Gillis, M. K. Test Type and Text Structure: An Analysis of Three Secondary Informal Reading Inventories, *Reading Horizons*, v28 n1 p70-80 Fall 1987.

Suggests that informal reading inventories (IRIs) should include both narrative and expository passages. Describes a study of several reading inventories indicating that some current secondary school IRIs have been constructed

with some consistency of text types, but failed to reveal a clear picture of text structure for the inventories.

Royer, James M.; and others. The Sentence Verification Technique: A Practical Procedure for Testing Comprehension, *Journal of Reading*, v30 n5 p414-22 Feb 1987.

Introduces a technique for comprehension assessment that allows teachers who have had only a moderate amount of training to develop tests that are valid, reliable, and interpretable. Notes that the procedure can be based on any text without an extended tryout and revision process.

Special Populations

Bender, Timothy A.; Horn, Harry L., Jr. Individual Differences in Achievement Orientation and Use of Classroom Feedback. 1988. 18p. [ED 298 156]

Compares individual differences in achievement orientation with differences in gifted students' use of feedback on a classroom exam. Finds that differences in motivational orientation were related to post-test performance on the Motivational Orientation Scale and the students' use of feedback.

Gomez, Mary Louise. Testing Policies and Procedures for the At-Risk Student Program Area. 1986. 41p. [ED 304 454]

Describes the testing procedures for the At-Risk Student Program Area, part of the National Center on Effective Secondary Schools, to determine how these secondary students are affected by special programs. Uses data to: (1) help inform program designers, teachers, and administrators about the effects of special programs; (2) highlight the skills and weaknesses of students within a program; and (3) allow researchers to compare and contrast programs.

Noble, Christopher S.; and others. Omit Rates on Criterion-Referenced Tests for Different Ethnic Groups: Implications for Large Scale Assessment. 1986. 14p. [ED 278 679]

Examines the relationship between item omission and item position on criterion-referenced tests in the Texas state assessment program. Provides information for framing test administration procedures in such a way that students from any particular ethnic group are not unfairly penalized.

Plato, Kathleen; and others. *A Study of Categorical Program Participation of Chapter 1 Students*. 1986. 157p. [ED 293 958]

Reviews the extent to which students served by Chapter 1 also received services from other categorical programs. Finds that: (1) children served in two programs are usually served in two different subjects; (2) Chapter 1 migrant students are more likely served by more than one program than Chapter 1 regular students; (3) multiply-served students scored lower in reading and mathematics than did singly-served students; (4) there is a dramatic decrease in special program services in grades 8 and 10 even though test scores at those grades show that students do not have a decreased need for such services; (5) students served in categorical programs are older and more likely male than students not served; (6) multiply-served students tend to be older than singly-served students; (7) Hispanics dominate the Chapter 1 migrant population, and Asians dominate the bilingual population; (8) self-reported absentee rates among special program students do not differ from those of the general population; (9) special program students are less likely to have preschool experiences or day care than the general population; (10) evidence of behavioral problems were present in the records of both the singly- and multiply-served child; and (11) students served by one special program appear to be experiencing only moderate academic difficulty; multiple services were reserved for the most seriously troubled students.

Content Area Assessment

Anderson, Thomas H.; Huang, Shang Cheng Chiu. On Using Concept Maps to Assess the Comprehension Effects of Reading Expository Text. Technical Report No. 483. 1989. 35p. [ED 310 368]

Uses concept maps to measure knowledge after reading expository text. Finds that subjects, 131 eighth-graders, scored better on a mapping test than a short answer test. Notes that mapping test scores correlate with classroom grades and standardized measures of achievement.

Brownson, Jean. Using Knowledge to Build Knowledge: The Thematic Approach to Content Reading. 1988. 11p. [ED 292 628]

Addresses the problem that lack of conceptual knowledge of some children may contribute to difficulty understanding content texts. Suggests strategies and activities designed to develop skills, strategies, and interest in reading.

Tobias, Sigmund. Mandatory Text Review and Interaction with Student Characteristics, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, v79 n2 p154-61 Jun 1987.

Studies students who were randomly assigned to read a text passage displayed on microcomputers in one of four conditions: (1) required reviewing of main text; or (2) alternate text when responses to adjunct questions were incorrect; (3) reading with adjunct questions; and (4) reading without adjunct questions.

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Informal Reading Inventories

By Jerry Johns and Peggy VanLeirsburg

Informal reading inventories (IRIs) have been used for nearly half a century to help assess students' reading. Thus, the ERIC database contains numerous citations relating to IRIs. The citations in this *FAST Bib* were selected specifically to help professionals understand the history of, the uses of, and the issues surrounding IRIs. The major sections of this bibliography are: Overview, General Uses, Critiques and Issues, Validity and Reliability Research, and Special Populations. Abstracts for some of the items cited here have been abbreviated to allow for the inclusion of additional citations.

Overview

Demos, E. S. "Evaluation/Testing Procedures in Reading," *Reading Horizons*, v27 n4 p254-60 Sum 1987.

Discusses the evaluation and testing procedures schools use to evaluate and test reading achievement. Identifies three major categories of tests: achievement/survey, diagnostic, and IRIs.

Henk, William A. "Reading Assessments of the Future: Toward Precision Diagnosis," *Reading Teacher*, v40 n9 p860-70 May 1987.

Concludes that standard reading inventories may be made more useful by modifying them to assess the specific abilities and needs of disabled readers. Offers suggestions for making modifications.

Johns, Jerry L.; Lunn, Mary K. "The Informal Reading Inventory: 1910-1980," *Reading World*, v23 n1 p9-19 Oct 1983.

Traces the origin and development of the IRI and discusses its future as an assessment tool.

Johnson, Marjorie Seddon; and others. *Informal Reading Inventories*, second edition. Reading Aids Series, IRA Service Bulletin. International Reading Association, Newark, DE. 1987. 164p. [ED 277 993; for the first edition, see ED 072 437]

Presents a comprehensive description of the use of IRIs and provides teachers and reading specialists with practical strategies for forming diagnostic impressions that are useful for planning reading instruction. Argues that the best IRIs evaluate reading through procedures that are as close as possible to natural reading activities and that there should be a close fit between assessment and instructional materials.

Pumfrey, Peter D. *Reading: Tests and Assessment Techniques*, second edition. United Kingdom Reading Association Teaching of Reading Monograph Series. International Reading Association, Newark, DE. 1985. 354p. [ED 298 448]

Describes various types of reading tests and assessment techniques. Outlines a strategy for selecting instruments. Includes a chapter on IRIs and oral miscue analysis. Concludes with an annotated bibliography of recent publications on the identification and alleviation of reading difficulties.

Searls, Evelyn F. "What's the Value of an IRI? Is It Being Used?" *Reading Horizons*, v28 n2 p92-101 Win 1988.

Reports on a survey which indicates that classroom teachers rarely use the Informal Reading Inventory. Suggests that teacher trainers focus on other more efficient means of obtaining reading diagnosis.

Walter, Richard B. "History and Development of the Informal Reading Inventory." 1974. 18p. [ED 098 539]

Presents the history of the IRI and the problems of validity, reliability, and the selection of performance criteria. Discusses the value of IRIs for determining the instructional level of students. Concludes with selected literature that supports the contention that most teachers cannot be successful in using the IRIs without training in construction, administration, and interpretation of such an instrument.

General Uses

Bader, Lois A.; Wiesendanger, Katherine D. "Realizing the Potential of Informal Reading Inventories," *Journal of Reading*, v32 n5 p402-08 Feb 1989.

Discusses the use of IRIs in evaluating reading performance. Notes that although the IRI provides an in-depth evaluation of reading behavior, it should be used in conjunction with other information to assess reading ability.

Blanchard, Jay; Johns, Jerry. "Informal Reading Inventories—A Broader View," *Reading Psychology*, v7 n3 piii-vii 1986.

Concludes that IRIs can be useful, flexible assessment and instruction tools in the hands of knowledgeable teachers. Offers suggestions for their use.

Harris, Larry A.; Lalik, Rosary M. "Teachers' Use of Informal Reading Inventories: An Example of School Constraints," *Reading Teacher*, v40 n7 p624-30 Mar 1987.

Reports on what started out to be a survey of the use of IRIs by teachers that revealed the technique to be embedded in a complex environment. Concludes that the use of IRIs and other diagnostic methods can be limited when teachers do not have primary responsibility for making placement decisions.

Kress, Roy. "Some Caveats When Applying Two Trends in Diagnosis: Remedial Reading" ERIC Digest Number 6. ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Bloomington, IN. 1988. 3p. [ED 297 303]

Examines the use of IRIs for student placement in reading groups and the use of computerized diagnosis and its limitations. Encourages careful use to minimize limitations.

Masztal, Nancy B.; Smith, Lawrence L. "Do Teachers Really Administer IRIs?" *Reading World*, v24 n1 p80-83 Oct 1984.

Concludes that most elementary school teachers surveyed were familiar with IRIs and knew how to administer them.

Critiques and Issues

Caldwell, JoAnne. "A New Look at the Old Informal Reading Inventory," *Reading Teacher*, v39 n2 p168-73 Nov 1985.

Indicates that the format and use of the IRIs need to be modified in order to address recent research findings of schema theory, text analysis, and metacognition.

Cardarelli, Aldo F. "The Influence of Reinspection on Students' IRI Results," *Reading Teacher*, v41 n7 p664-67 Mar 1988.

Claims that in the conventional administration of the IRI comprehension diagnosis is inordinately influenced by the reader's ability to recall information. Suggests that allowing reinspection by the reader restores recall to its proper function and may result in other advantages.

Duffelmeyer, Frederick A.; Duffelmeyer, Barbara Blakely. "Main Idea Questions on Informal Reading Inventories," *Reading Teacher*, v41 n2 p162-66 Nov 1987.

Considers whether comprehension questions that claim to assess students' skills in finding main ideas may in fact be measuring their knowledge of identifying the passage topic.

Gillis, M. K.; Olson, Mary W. "Elementary IRIs: Do They Reflect What We Know about Text Type/Structure and Comprehension?" *Reading Research and Instruction*, v27 n1 p36-44 Fall 1987.

Analyzes four IRIs to determine the text type of each passage, whether narrative passages are well formed, and whether expository passages are well organized. Finds almost half the narratives poorly formed. Concludes that the lack of continuity in text type and organization could result in students' comprehension scores being erratic and invalid.

Warren, Thomas S. "Informal Reading Inventories—A New Format." Paper presented at the 11th Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Regional Conference of the International Reading Association, 1985. 11p. [ED 269 740]

Discusses weaknesses in both published and teacher-made IRIs. Suggests using the Fry readability formula. Introduces teachers to a new format for published inventories.

Validity and Realiability Research

Anderson, Betty. "A Report on IRI Scoring and Interpretation." Paper presented at the 31st Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association, 1986. 12p. [ED 271 725]

Examines what oral reading accuracy level is most appropriate for the instructional level and whether repetitions should count as oral reading errors. Includes tables indicating word recognition accuracy at each level of an IRI and percentage of oral reading accuracy with and without repetitions.

Duffelmeyer, Frederick A.; Duffelmeyer, Barbara Blakely. "Are IRI Passages Suitable for Assessing Main Idea Comprehension?" *Reading Teacher*, v42 n6 p358-63 Feb 1989.

Discusses characteristics reading passages must have if they are to be used for main idea assessment. Analyzes each grade one to grade

six passage on the Analytical Reading Inventory, Basic Reading Inventory, and Informal Reading Inventory, measuring suitability for use in main idea assessment. Finds many passages are unsuitable.

Fuchs, Lynn S.; and others. "The Validity of Informal Reading Comprehension Measures," *Remedial and Special Education (RASE)*, v9 n2 p20-28 Mar-Apr 1988.

Assesses the criterion, construct, and concurrent validity of four informal reading comprehension measures (question answering tests, recall measures, oral passage reading tests, and cloze techniques) with 70 mildly and moderately retarded middle and junior high school boys. Finds that correct oral reading rate score demonstrated the strongest criterion validity.

Helgren-Lempesis, Valerie A.; Mangrum, Charles T., II. "An Analysis of Alternate-Form Reliability of Three Commercially-Prepared Informal Reading Inventories," *Reading Research Quarterly*, v21 n2 p209-15 Spr 1986.

Examines the interclass and intraclass reliability of three published IRIs and their alternate forms and concludes that though acceptable, the reliabilities of the inventories suggest the need for cautious interpretation.

Homan, Susan P.; Klesius, Janell P. "A Re-Examination of the IRI: Word Recognition Criteria," *Reading Horizons*, v26 n1 p54-61 Fall 1985.

Confirms previous findings that the word recognition criterion for instructional reading level on IRIs should be set at about 95% for students reading at grade levels one through six.

Joels, Rosie Webb; Anderson, Betty. "Informal Reading Inventory Comprehension Questions: Are Classification Schemes Valid?" *Reading Horizons*, v28 n3 p178-83 Spr 1988.

Presents a study which examines elementary school students' performance on the JAT (Joels, Anderson, and Thompson) Reading Inventory, noting variable student performance on the different question types. Reports that the validity of the JAT as a diagnostic instrument is established.

Newcomer, Phyllis L. "A Comparison of Two Published Reading Inventories," *Remedial and Special Education (RASE)*, v6 n1 p31-36, Jan-Feb 1985.

Studies the extent to which two commercially published IRIs that identify the same instructional level when administered to 50 children in grades one through seven demonstrate a significant lack of congruence between the instruments, particularly at the intermediate grade levels.

Olson, Mary W.; Gillis, M. K. "Text Type and Text Structure: An Analysis of Three Secondary Informal Reading Inventories," *Reading Horizons*, v28 n1 p70-80 Fall 1987.

Suggests that IRIs should include both narrative and expository passages. Describes a study of several reading inventories indicating that some current secondary school IRIs have been constructed with some consistency of text types. No clear picture of text structure for the inventories was found.

Special Populations

Cheek, Earl H., Jr.; and others. "Informal Reading Assessment Strategies for Adult Readers," *Lifelong Learning*, v10 n7 p8-10, 25-26 May 1987.

Describes practical and readily accessible informal assessment strategies for evaluating adult readers. Includes (1) observation, (2) simplified reading inventories, (3) cloze procedures, (4) group reading inventories, (5) criterion- referenced tests, and (6) IRIs.

LaSasso, Carol; Swaiko, Nancy. "Considerations in Selecting and Using Commercially Prepared Informal Reading Inventories with Deaf Students," *American Annals of the Deaf*, v128 n4 p449-52 Aug 1983.

Offers guidelines for the selection and use of commercially prepared IRIs with deaf students. Modifications for deaf students pertain to: selection of the passage to begin testing, the criteria for oral and silent reading levels, and procedures for estimating students' reading potential levels.

Manning, Maryann; and others. "A Comparison among Measures of Reading Achievement with Low Income Black Third Grade Students." Paper presented at the 69th Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, 1985. 26p. [ED 261 074]

Compares the results of different types of reading achievement measures for 58 low-income urban black third graders. Finds that correlations among all of the measures were moderate to high. Examination of teachers' judgments regarding reading book placement, as compared to test results, indicated that teachers underestimated students' reading ability and placements did not reflect test results.

Scales, Alice M. "Alternatives to Standardized Tests in Reading Education: Cognitive Styles and In-

formal Measures," *Negro Educational Review*, v38 n2-3 pp99-106 Apr-Jul 1987.

Discusses students with various cognitive styles and their inability to perform well on standardized tests. Notes that impulsive and reflective style students seem to do better on informal tests. Suggests a combination of standardized and informal testing for making educational decisions.

Sullivan, Joanna. "Differences in the Oral Reading Performance of English and Spanish Speaking Pupils from the United States and Venezuela," *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, v19 n4 p68-73 Sum 1986.

Compares results of 90 pupils in grades one through three, half English-speaking and half Spanish-speaking, on IRIs administered in their respective countries. Determines by analysis of variance whether significant differences exist between decoding errors of pupils in both countries.

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Reading Assessment in Elementary Education

By Roger Sensenbaugh

The state of reading assessment at the elementary level is in flux. Some writers argue, very forcefully, that the construction of standardized tests has not kept up with advances in reading research and that current standardized tests do more harm than good. Others argue that alternatives to standardized tests have their own problems. The consensus seems to be that standardized tests and alternative, classroom-based assessment each have their place and that both kinds of testing must be chosen, used, and evaluated with caution.

Overview

Farr, Roger. "New Trends in Reading Assessment: Better Tests, Better Uses," *Curriculum Review*, v27 n1 p21-23 Sep-Oct 1987.

Focuses on the need to develop better tests of students' reading abilities and better interpretation of test scores. Describes criterion-referenced tests versus norm-referenced tests, highlighting the Degrees of Reading Power and Metropolitan Achievement Tests: Reading, and discusses the need for assessing the reading process.

Fredericks, Anthony D. "Latest Model," *Reading Teacher*, v40 n8 p790-91 Apr 1987.

Offers a humorous look at the problem of assessment.

Froese, Victor. "Language Assessment: What We Do and What We Should Do! " *Canadian Journal of English Language Arts*, v11 n1 p33-40 1988.

Sketches some of the dilemmas in language assessment and presents exemplary practical approaches to assessment in the areas of listening, oral language, reading, and writing.

Manning, Gary; and others. "First Grade Reading Assessment: Teacher Opinions, Standardized Reading Tests, and Informal Reading Inventories." Paper presented at the 14th Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, 1985. 13p. [ED 265 204]

Investigates the relationship between and among the results of three types of reading assessments in the first grade: a standardized reading test (the Stanford Achievement Test); an informal reading inventory (the Classroom Reading Inventory); and teacher judgment of student rank in reading achievement. Teacher opinion correlated with all subtests of the standardized test and the word recognition portion of the reading inventory. The achievement of all combined classrooms and most individual classrooms in the study was average or above, based on national norms.

Valencia, Sheila; Pearson, P. David. "Reading Assessment: Time for a Change," *Reading Teacher*, v40 n8 p726-32 Apr 1987.

Argues that the tests used to measure reading achievement do not reflect recent advances in the understanding of the reading process, and that effective instruction can best be fostered by resolving the discrepancy between what is known and what is measured.

Standardized Tests

Blanchard, Jay S. "Test Review: Computer-Based Reading Assessment Instrument (CRAI)," *Reading Teacher*, v41 n1 p92-94 Oct 1987.

Evaluates the Computer-Based Assessment Instrument (CRAI) as a test of reading proficiency. Notes strengths of CRAI, including its use as a quick assessment of silent reading comprehension level, and the problems with readability and content-specific word lists and the lack of scoring features.

Grunkmeyer, Virgil. "Primary Reading Assessment—Quick and Easy," *Reading Horizons*, v27 n2 p86-88 Win 1986.

Explains the use of the Dolch List in the lower elementary grades.

Rasool, Joan M.; Royer, James M. "Assessment of Reading Comprehension Using the Sentence Verification Technique: Evidence from Narrative and Descriptive Texts," *Journal of Educational Research*, v79 n3 p180-84 Jan-Feb 1986.

The sentence verification technique (SVT) was used to test 44 third graders, to assess the validity of the technique. Results were viewed as being consistent with the interpretation that the SVT is a valid means of measuring reading comprehension.

Reynolds, Cecil R.; and others. "Regression Analyses of Bias on the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children," *Journal of School Psychology*, v23 n2 p195-204 Sum 1985.

Investigates the criterion-related validity of the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC), predicting reading comprehension, arithmetic, and general achievement, for large samples of blacks and whites tested during the standardization of the battery. Finds that the Sequential and Mental Processing Composite scales tended to overpredict black children's academic levels, especially on the achievement scales.

Roberts, Douglas B.; and others. "Michigan Educational Assessment Program Handbook, 1986-87." Michigan State Board of Education, Lansing, MI, 1986. 109 p. [ED 278 710]

This handbook was developed to assist educators in analyzing, using, and reporting Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) test results. It includes an overview of the program and a description of the tests; numbers of objectives and test items for each skill area; suggested methods; techniques and strategies for using the results at the student, school, and district levels; and a discussion of appropriate uses of the test results.

Sawyer, Diane J.; and others. "Test Review: Group Assessment in Reading: Classroom Teacher's Handbook," *Reading Teacher*, v39 n6 p544-47 Feb 1986.

Examines the GAR, which is intended as a group assessment of reading ability for elementary and secondary school students in the areas of reading level, comprehension, study skills, and reading interests. Concludes that the test has many shortcomings.

Alternative Measures

Bartoli, Jill Sunday. "The Paradox in Reading: Has the Solution Become the Problem? " *Journal of Reading*, v28 n7 p580-84 Apr 1985.

Suggests that continually refined and segmented reading assessment measures may contribute to reading problems. Discusses three solutions to reading difficulties that have become problems themselves and suggests that more holistic, socially interactive teaching methods are a better solution to reading disabilities.

Calfee, Robert C. "The School as a Context for Assessment of Literacy," *Reading Teacher*, v40 n8 p738-43 Apr 1987.

Notes that classroom assessment of literacy is dominated by methods more appropriate to external mandates. Suggests an alternative method grounded in the teacher's professional judgment and in the relations between curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Dixon, John. "Becoming a Maturer Reader," *Reading Teacher*, v40 n8 p761-65 Apr 1987.

Points out that children's growth in response to literature is not assessed by existing standardized tests or by progress from one textbook to another. Suggests guidelines for teacher observation of children's responses and provides a checklist for assessing oral and written reactions.

Johnston, Peter. "Teachers as Evaluation Experts," *Reading Teacher*, v40 n8 p744-48 Apr 1987.

Argues that process-oriented evaluation of children's literacy by the classroom teacher is more efficient and more instructionally valid than current test-driven evaluation procedures.

Leadbetter, Peter; Winteringham, David. "Data-Pac: What's in It for Teachers?" *British Journal of Special Education*, v13 n4 p162-64 Dec 1986.

The article describes Data-Pac (Daily Teaching and Assessment for Primary Aged Children), materials which assess student performance in reading, mathematics, handwriting, and spelling and present a selection of sequenced teaching objectives for an individualized program. Materials reflect the concepts of criterion-referenced assessment, direct instruction, behavioral objectives, and precision teaching.

Moore, David W. "A Case for Naturalistic Assessment of Reading Comprehension," *Language Arts*, v60 n8 p957-69 Nov-Dec 1983.

Presents a historical overview of the introduction of the major reading comprehension assessments, showing that the predominant approaches were shaped by the prevailing educational measurement milieu and were implemented largely in response to public pressure. Argues in favor of a naturalistic reading comprehension assessment for evaluating those behaviors that elude quantification.

Wood, Karen D. "Read First, Test Later: Meeting the Needs of the 'Overskilled' Reader," *Reading Horizons*, v24 n2 p133-40 Win 1984.

Discusses the problems of overusing workbooks, dittos, and basal assessment tests in beginning reading instruction. Proposes alternatives.

Woodley, John W. "Reading Assessment from a Whole Language Perspective." 1988. 16 p. [ED 296 309]

Approaches to reading assessment within the whole language framework include a print awareness task, book handling task, patterned language task, reading interview, miscue analysis, and situational responses to reading. Argues that the observations made by teachers using these assessments provide a meaningful alternative to heavy reliance on standardized tests and lead to a more effective educational program for all.

Woodley, John W.; Smith, R. Lee. "Reading Assessment for the Young Reader." 1988. 23 p. [ED 295 126]

Methods used to diagnose a seven-year-old boy's reading problems illustrate the fact that reading assessments based upon a reader's strengths and his/her understanding and control of the process will provide information which is more useful to teachers and parents than that provided by the numerical results of standardized tests.

Informal Reading Inventories

Cardarelli, Aldo F. "The Influence of Reinspection on Students' IRI Results," *Reading Teacher*, v41 n7 p664-67 Mar 1988.

Claims that in the conventional administration of the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) comprehension diagnosis is inordinately influenced by the reader's ability to recall information. Suggests that allowing reinspection by the reader restores recall to its proper function and may result in other advantages.

Fuchs, Lynn S.; and others. "The Validity of Informal Reading Comprehension Measures," *Remedial and Special Education (RASE)*, v9 n2 p20-28 Mar-Apr 1988.

Assesses the criterion, construct, and concurrent validity of four informal reading comprehension measures (question answering tests, recall measures, oral passage reading tests, and cloze techniques) with 70 mildly and moderately retarded middle and junior high school boys. Results indicated that correct oral reading rate score demonstrated the strongest criterion validity.

Henk, William A. "Reading Assessments of the Future: Toward Precision Diagnosis," *Reading Teacher*, v40 n9 p860-70 May 1987.

Concludes that modified standard reading inventories may be made more useful for assessing the specific abilities and needs of disabled readers. Offers suggestions for making modifications.

Johnson, Marjorie Seddon; and others. "Informal Reading Inventories." second edition. Reading Aids Series, IRA Service Bulletin. International Reading Association, Newark, DE 1987. 164 p. [ED 277 993; for the first edition, see ED 072 437.]

Represents a comprehensive description of the use of informal reading inventories (IRIs). Provides teachers and reading specialists with practical strategies for forming diagnostic impressions that are useful for planning reading instruction.

Searls, Evelyn F. "What's the Value of an IRI? Is It Being Used? " *Reading Horizons*, v28 n2 p92-101 Win 1988.

Reports on a survey which indicates that classroom teachers rarely use the Informal Reading Inventory—a diagnostic and placement instrument for reading comprehension long recommended by teacher trainers. Suggests that teacher trainers focus on other more efficient means of obtaining reading diagnosis.

Learning Disabled

Dudley-Marling, Curt. "Assessing the Reading and Writing Development of Learning-Disabled Students: An Holistic Approach," *B. C. Journal of Special Education*, v12 n1 p41-51 1988.

Recommends a holistic approach to reading assessment, in contrast to traditional practices in reading and writing assessment which focus on fragmented, isolated skills. Sees children's reading and writing as communicative behaviors which are effectively evaluated through systematic observation as they occur in natural settings.

Ewoldt, Carolyn. "Reading Tests and the Deaf Reader," *Perspectives for Teachers of the Hearing-Impaired*, v5 n4 p21-24 Mar-Apr 1987.

Argues that standardized reading tests are likely to provide an inaccurate assessment of reading comprehension for deaf students be-

cause of the lack of test coaching and test taking skills; item irrelevancy; and the difficulty of test directions. Testing alternatives include parent and teacher observation of students and qualitative evaluations of reading skills and strategies.

Gupta, R. M. "Learning Efficiency versus Low IQ and/or Teachers' Ratings as Predictors of Reading Ability of 'Mentally Defective' Children: A Longitudinal Study," *Educational Studies*, v11 n2 p109-18 1985.

Asserts that low IQ should not be deemed an index of poor learning ability. Information about middle school children's learning efficiency as measured by the Learning Efficiency Test Battery was found to be more useful for predicting reading ability than conventional types of assessment.

Silberman, Roseanne K.; Sowell, Virginia. "The Visually Impaired Student with Learning Disabilities: Strategies for Success in Language Arts," *Education of the Visually Handicapped*, v18 n4 p139-50 Win 1987.

Recommends assessment techniques and teaching strategies in the area of reading and language arts for the visually impaired student with learning disabilities. Outlines reading approaches, practical strategies for teaching reading comprehension and spelling, and suggestions for organizing the classroom environment.

Teeter, Phyllis Anne; Smith, Philip L. "Neuropsychological Assessment and Training of Cognitive Processing Strategies for Reading Recognition and Comprehension: A Computer Assisted Program for Learning Disabled Students." Final Report. Wisconsin Univ., Milwaukee, WI, 1986. 12p. [ED 278 209]

Describes the development and validation of microcomputer software during a two-year project to help assess the skills of reading disabled elementary grade children and to provide basic reading instruction.

ERIC/RCS

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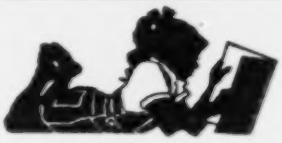

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C. Selecting one of the library's volumes of *RIE*, in this case the January-June 1988 semiannual index, the teacher finds the following documents in the subject index:

Writing Readiness

Children's Names: Landmarks for Literacy? **ED 290 171**
Integrating Reading and Writing Instruction at the Primary level. **ED 286 158**
Sister and Brother Writing Interplay. **ED 285 176**
Writing Begins at Home: Preparing Children for Writing before They Go to School. **ED 285 207**

D. **ED 285 207** Looks like an appropriate resource, so the teacher finds that ED number in a monthly issue of *RIE "January 1988" in the document resume section:*

ED 285 207 **CS 210 790**

Clay, Marie
Writing Begins at Home: Preparing Children for Writing before They Go to School.
Report No. ISBN-0-435-08452-6
Pub Date 87
Note 64p.
Available from Heinemann Educational Books Inc., 70 Court St., Portsmouth, NH 03801 ($12.50)
Pub type Books (010) - Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
Document Not Available from EDRS.
Descriptors Case Studies, Family Environment, Language Acquisition, *Parent Child Relationship, Parent Participation, Parent Role, *Preschool Children, Preschool Education, Psychomotor Skills, Reading Writing Relationship, Writing Exercises, *Writing Readiness, *Written Language

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Identifiers_ *Childrens Writing, *Emergent Literacy, Writing Attitudes

Intended for parents of preschoolers, this book offers samples of children's writing (defined as the funny signs and symbols that pencils make) and attempts to show how parents can support and expand children's discovery of printed language before children begin school. Each of the eight chapters contains numerous examples of young children's drawing and printing, as well as helpful comments and practical considerations to orient parents. The chapters are entitled: (1) Getting in Touch; (2) Exploration and Discoveries; (3) I Want to Record a Message; (4) We Follow Sally Ann's Progress; (5) Individual Differences at School Entry; (6) How Can a Parent Help?; (7) The Child at School; and (8) Let Your Child Read. (References and a list of complementary publications are attached.) (NKA)

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edited by Carl B. Smith

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❑ MasterCard ❑ VISA

cardholder _____

card no. _____

expiration date _____

Make checks payable to ERIC/RCS.

Order Subtotal	Postage and Handling
$5.00-$10.00	$2.00
$10.01-$25.00	$3.00
$25.01-$50.00	$4.00
$50.01-$75.00	$5.00
$75.01-$100.00	$6.00
$100.01-$125.00	$7.00
$125.01-$150.00	$8.00
over $150.00	$9.00

Send order form to:
ERIC/RCS
Indiana University
2805 E. 10th Street, Suite 150
Bloomington, IN 47408-2698